

Nervy Girl!

The Thinking Woman's Magazine

www.nervygirlzine.com

January/February 2001

The **Islam** Issue

Queen Noor
visits Portland

A Nervy Girl
visits Indonesia

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Mission Statement

Nervy Girl! strives to create a magazine for women that:

- recognizes the depth and diversity of women's interests and concerns.
- creates a forum for debate and the exchange of ideas among women.
- celebrates women's diversity, achievements, and progress benchmarks.
- updates readers about developments regarding women's issues and health.
- encourages readers to accept and celebrate people of all races, ethnic origins, sexual orientations, ages, religions, and classes.
- promotes positive and realistic body images for women.
- encourages women to participate in positive change for their communities.

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Clarification: The editors wish to clarify Karen McGill's column "Property That Purrs" (January/February 2001). Ballot Measure 3 did not specifically stipulate that injured or destroyed pets are considered property loss. The editors wish to apologize for any confusion.

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Editor's Note

Consider this an open invitation to share your viewpoints by offering stories, queries, and, hell, even story ideas by writing to ngrsubs@hotmail.com.

When we started *Nervy Girl!*, I knew my desire to create a challenging, intelligent women's magazine and my need to sell advertising to offset publishing costs would conflict. I just didn't know that it would wear away the gray matter of my brain. The process isn't hard. Just tedious. And gut-wrenching when talking to someone who just doesn't get it.

Like the chiropractor who told me that several women had told him that they'd be embarrassed to read *Nervy Girl!* in his waiting room. When I asked why, he cited a half-page story in our Reproductive Health Issue (November/December 2000) about feminine hygiene products. He insisted that those embarrassed women were of varying ages and that they'd told him as individuals (not a group). I said, "Oh, really. So several women who were too embarrassed to *read* about menstruation weren't too shy to *tell* a middle-aged male that they were embarrassed to *read* it." Hmm. I'd like to think that my doctor would encourage me to read about anything concerning my health, whether it embarrassed me or not.

Then there was the female real estate agent who said she didn't understand why women needed their own magazines. The thrift shop manager who told me she wasn't authorized to make decisions about advertising without the two male owners; when I asked her if the owners had seen the materials I'd dropped off, she said, "Oh, no. I don't let them read when they're here working."

Granted, the list of wackos is largely put out of balance by the wonderful people who do get what we're doing. The ones who say, "Keep it up" and "It's about time!" make the mind-numbing task of selling advertising bearable and even pleasant at times.

My point is that the constraints of selling advertising limit the liberty with which *Nervy Girl!* can do what it was designed to do — engage women in a dialogue about provocative, complex issues. Mind you, this consideration doesn't change my determination to create a nervy publication, but it does temper it. After all, we lost one advertiser (that we know of) for publishing an Erotica issue.

I've recently been giving this struggle a lot of thought, because we recently lost two volunteers (that we know of) because we failed to be a more "fearless, gripping, stand-up-and-be-heard type of publication." They both were with us from the beginning, and both were women of color. Both said they felt out of place within our group and likened us to a "sorority club," a wholly unfair classification in my opinion.

I feel these accusations need addressing, because as a publication, *Nervy Girl!* couldn't be more open. We've never *not* published a story because we thought it would offend someone. Every other month we hold meetings in which the public is invited to share their ideas, and so far three of our four covers, including this one, have featured people of color. I'd like to stress that we are a relatively new,

entirely volunteer-run operation. If our pages fail to sufficiently reflect the views of people of all races, ethnic origins, religions, and sexual orientations, it's because: 1) we've only published four issues and 2) our writers and editors are all unpaid. It's a struggle for us just to publish each time, let alone plan an issue that will please everyone 100 percent.

And we don't want to please everyone. We want to offer a forum of ideas. So, if you'd like *Nervy Girl!* to be something different—more diverse, more nervy, more anything, then consider this an open invitation to share your viewpoints by offering stories, queries, and, hell, even story ideas by writing to ngrsubs@hotmail.com. If you write to this e-mail address and request writing or art submission guidelines, we'll send them to you. If you write us about a good idea and we can interest someone in writing it, we'll print it.

If you're just going to stand on the sidelines and criticize without engaging in an open dialogue to help build understanding for a group that you feel a part of, whether it's political, racial, sexual, whatever, then we're going to miss out on what you have to offer. And that's not just our loss.

Stay nervy,

Kristin Schuchman, Editor

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Women's Herstory

By Rena Grasso

Declaring War

Education researchers Myra and David Sadker point out, "Each time a girl opens a book and reads a womanless history, she learns she is worthless." Sadly, the vast majority of girls and boys are reading "womanless history." According to a 1992 Women's History Project study (whose founders won commemoration of Women's History Month in 1981), in schools, grades K-12 history books still devote only 2 to 3 percent of written space to women.



MRS. PANKHURST ADDRESSES A BY-ELECTION CROWD

British suffragist Emmeline Pankhurst, (the subject of this column) chronicled the first wave of the women's movement in *My Own Story*. She wrote of "the strenuousness and the desperation of the conflict" and hoped to inspire in future daughters "the courage and fighting strength of women, who ... lose all sense of fear and continue their struggle... past the gates of death, never flinching."

Looking back across 5,000 years in the patriarchal desert to a mere century ago, we realize that the women's movement is so young. As recent as 1971, the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution granted civil and equal rights to all people, finally admitting women into the category of human beings.

Historically, as American women, we are the heirs to the first and second waves of the women's movement. Looking back through our century of struggle, we discern a pattern. After the 1920s and the vote, the women's movement grew quiet and vanished. More than 40 years passed before the 1960s erupted and the great second wave swept women into the heady transformations of feminism. In 2001, we seem to be in the same doldrums following suffrage victory.

This March, Women's History Month, we should pause and take account. We are in the wake of that second wave and are seemingly becalmed in a sea, but under darkening clouds. Our hard-won rights—

and those we have yet to enjoy—are seriously threatened, as is much else we hold dear. If we look at history, it shows us how new we are to this cause, how brave we've been, and how crucial feminism is to humanity.

Eighty-nine years ago, Pankhurst, leader of the British Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), declared war on England. "I incite rebellion!" she thundered above the assembled suffragists. To Pankhurst, the first wave of the women's movement was "the greatest mission the world had ever known—the freeing of one half the human race." The cause was worth the fight. After its inception in 1903, the motto "Deeds, not Words" emblazoned the banners of the WSPU. In 1912, goaded by the latest broken promise, Pankhurst urged the Suffrage army "to make British life unsafe and insecure" as long as its government continued to fiercely oppose women's rights.

The response was swift and bold. Within days, country manors across England burned; throughout London, windows were smashed in high officials' homes and in public places. When a bomb exploded in Cabinet Minister Lloyd George's residence, Pankhurst was arrested (for the fifth time) and sentenced to three years for inciting violence.

This was not the beginning of the battle British women fought to gain equal rights, and particularly, the right to vote. Starting in the 1830s, British women began to collectively demand to be heard. Before 1912, when Pankhurst urged physical action, WSPU women regularly demonstrated with vigor, spoke out passionately, and lobbied before politicians. But after seeing no results from this passive demonstrating, Pankhurst and others were fed up and eager to act militantly.

As always, Pankhurst declared herself a political prisoner in the war against women. She accepted responsibility for the militancy, challenging that property values were not more important than women's lives. She accused the government of a litany of inequities and abuses, and she put the high court in its place: "You have not the right to human justice, not the right by the constitution of the country—if rightly interpreted—to judge me, because you are not my peers." From prison, Pankhurst, although weakened by a hunger and thirst strike, continued to direct the insurrection.

Talk about a nervy girl, and what a courageous stand. Pankhurst and her heroism embodies the monumental British Suffrage movement, as well as the legion of legendary women who enlisted in the WSPU army and were dedicated to the cause. It's intolerable that so few know this history and its heroines.

Pankhurst's two daughters, Christabel and Sylvia, followed in their mother's footsteps. As children, both tried to attend Suffrage meetings, and barely out of adolescence, became major generals in the field. Christabel earned a law degree despite the fact that women were barred from practicing law. In her 20s, she faced the magistrates, defending herself and her co-defendant sisters and her mother—it was a tour de force. Christabel subpoenaed famous congressmen of her time and made them eat their words till their faces reddened with indigestible fury. She talked circles around the magistrates and denounced the liberal government (our Democratic Party) as disgraces to statesmanship. Her mother spoke next at the trial... imagine that awesome day in court!

Sylvia Pankhurst also had an influence as an artist and revolutionary. Eventually, she would part ways with her mother and sister, becoming a staunch pacifist and socialist. During the 1910s, we see her influence in WSPU's militant style. The marches were spectacles, enlivened with ritual and drama. Women assembled at the entrance to Westminster Bridge, around the statue of Boadica, a second century warrior queen who led the revolt against the Roman conquerors. They marched behind Suffragists dressed as Joan of Arc (the Suffragists' icon of courage), whose horses and banners blazed with the suffrage colors—purple, gold, and white.

England had never witnessed their numbers. In 1908, Cabinet Minister Gladstone stressed that only by gathering a major force—as men had done—could women earn the vote. The WSPU picked up the glove. The biggest demonstration in England's history was 72,000 people. The WSPU responded by announcing that 250,000 would march in Hyde Park on June 21, 1908.

On that day, the *London Times* reported that 500,000 people crowded around 20 platforms from which 20 "Boadicas" demanded justice on behalf of all women. "Never," reported the *Daily Express*, "had so many people assembled in a square mile of

England." It was a tremendous victory. Even the press declared success for the women and urged the government to enfranchise women.

However, the Suffrage struggle still had a long way to go. The government refused to budge. Only 20 years later, in 1928, the year Emmeline Pankhurst died, and close to a century since the struggle began, did British women finally win the vote. Many more battles would be fought. By 1914, when World War I broke out and the Suffrage movement lost momentum, more than a thousand women in the British Isles had gone to prison at least once. Pankhurst wrote, "It is not possible to publish a full list of the women who have died or been injured for life in the course of suffrage agitation."

The metaphorical suffrage "Pantheon" overflows with awesome women who unified across class boundaries and forged a movement with a steel core of militancy in England between 1903 and 1914. Here are a few of their stories:

Annie Kenney, a mill worker and member of the operatives' union, worked with Sylvia Pankhurst to organize a triumphant parade that astonished even Emmeline Pankhurst herself—400 female factory workers were backed up by thousands of new recruits who packed into the meeting hall to launch the London suffrage movement.

Miss Wallace Dunlop began the hunger strike made famous by the British Suffrage movement. Lady Constance Lytton (alias Jane Walton) underwent seven forced feedings disguised as a common woman. Lytton revealed her true identity to publicize the horrors the Suffrage prisoners were enduring to a shocked aristocracy and an outraged international community.

Mrs. New and Mrs. Leigh, the two women who inaugurated the famed suffrage "argument of the stone," encouraging physical action, were arrested for smashing windows at 10 Downing—England's White House. Their action was part of a confrontation between the police and 100,000 women, who were rushing Parliament. Twenty-nine women were arrested before the stand-off ended at midnight. Leigh and New were sentenced to two months in Holloway prison, a dark and dank hellhole. To their judges' severe rebukes, Leigh, with a nod from her co-defendant, retorted: "We have no other course but to rebel against oppression, and if necessary, to resort to stronger measures. This fight is going on."

And what an amazing fight it was. The WSPU was an organization of radical feminists. They waged a war, not a metaphor. Battalions of women stormed the seats of power, platoons led guerrilla assaults, and teams conducted daring feats of espionage and sabotage. Prior to Pankhurst's militant declaration in

1912, for 10 years without relent, the WSPU made their presence known. They disrupted Congress, ambushed statesmen and held them hostage to women's demands, and made the Prime Minister's life a constant security challenge. The WSPU even confronted the King at the opera "Jeanne d'Arc" to remind him that real Joans of Arc were taking the cause to his streets, being tortured in his prisons and oppressed by his laws. The Suffragists smashed windows, set fires and planted bombs, defaced public

might one day join and "bring about a union that would blaze new trails."

It happened then, and it can happen again. Pankhurst passed us the torch. She wrote her history because she believed in us and our potential contributions to the greatest mission the world has ever known. Happy Women's History Month, all.NG

A father inscribed my second-hand copy of Pankhurst's chronicle: "To my Susie dear who lives and moves in the Pankhurst tradition. Your father, Portland, Oregon, 30th June 1993."

If Susie is reading this, please email me: renagm@aol.com. I really need to meet you. For those with comments, or requests for future history topics, please do the same.



MRS. PANKHURST AND MISS CHRISTABEL PANKHURST
IN PRISON DRESS

buildings and cultural artifacts, and harassed big-wigs on the golf course. They won the press' attention with their spectacles, and they were constantly in the face of men of power.

It is amazing that so few know this history, and that many of us hold demeaning images of suffrage. The word conjures feeble pictures of prim, maybe even prudish ladies with their secondary social causes—an unconsciously cruel way to remember those "Joans of Arc" and "Boadicas" who launched the contemporary women's movement. It hurts us as women and handicaps us as feminists to be estranged from this history. Learning about these intellectual, political, and moral giants would empower girls who now suffer from the dearth of female heroes.

While it's true that we do see more clearly standing on the shoulders of our "giants" who paved the way, the most important meaning of the past is guidance into the future. When I think about Pankhurst, I can almost hear young Christabel chiding her astonished mother: "How long you women have been trying for the vote. For my part, I mean to get it," perhaps inspiring her mother's vision that Suffragists young and old

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By Margaret McConnell

Green Thumb

New buds are glistening in the rain these days and the Oregon Junco has begun to visit backyard bird-feeders again. Temperatures are slowly creeping up, reminding us that outdoor dining will soon become a reality again, whether it's in our backyard, on the apartment balcony, or at a favorite bistro. Yes, all the signs are here—spring is in the air.

For many of us, that means our hands are in the soil. Whether you're a novice or tried-and-true gardener (whose callused hands reveal their passion), gardening is a wonderful way to celebrate this season of renewal.

The following projects can be created in a variety of environments, but instructions are provided for container planting. They are easy enough for first-time gardeners and can be completed for less than \$25. With each project, keep an eye on the growth progress and consult your local nursery if necessary.

Project #1 - Sandy's Special Tomatoes

There's nothing like growing your own vegetables. Tomatoes are the easiest crop to grow and will have the greatest chance at success. This growing recipe produced an endless supply of richly flavored tomatoes last summer. The trick is basil and plenty of sunshine. Here's what you'll need:

- One pot, 10-gallon size or larger (prices start around \$10)
- One tomato "starter," which is a plant that's about 5" tall. These are often most healthy when purchased from a nursery (\$1.50 - \$3)
- Two to three basil "starters" (\$3-\$5)
- Potting soil (\$5-\$10)
- Inexpensive stakes (\$2)
- A very sunny and warm location

Fill your pot with soil and moisten. Working the water in with your hands will help the soil to evenly absorb moisture. Avoid puddles of water, and be sure to use a pot that drains well. Place your tomato starter in the center of the pot, and plant the basil starters evenly around the periphery. Growing basil in the same soil as your tomatoes will infuse the fruit with extra flavor, and you can add it to the tomato dishes you create.

Place your tomatoes in a location that will be sunny and warm in the summer months. In the

spring, you may not need to water very much if your pot is collecting rainfall, but water often enough so that the topsoil dries out before the next watering. As tomatoes begin to appear (around June), stake branches so they can support the weight of your produce. When the tomatoes turn red, they're ready. Good luck and happy eating!

Project #2 – Plant a Flower Box

An exciting mixed planter has a burst of color and a variety of foliage. It's a great project for a beginner because assembly and care are very basic. Here's what you'll need:

- A square, rectangular or circular planter, in whatever size suits your needs (starting at \$7)
- One small geranium (\$2)
- Three small pansies (\$6)
- Two lobelia, or other trailer of your choice (\$4)
- Two very small ivy "starters"
- Potting soil (\$3)

Prepare soil as described in the instructions for project number one. Place your geranium in the center of the pot. Next, place the three pansies in a circle around the geranium. The two lobelia should be placed at opposite sides of the container, and the small bits of ivy can be planted in any open spaces. As a result, your planter will be tallest at the center and billow down toward the pansies, lobelia, and ivy that will eventually trail over the container's edge.

In the warmer months, a weekly watering should suffice. Pinch back flowers that have completed their bloom to allow for new flowers. In the fall, foliage will die back. Compost what remains of your plants and save your planter for the following year.

Project #3 – Start Composting

Composting is one of the easiest gardening projects you can start, because nature does most of the work. Apartment dwelling doesn't make it impossible to participate in this environment-friendly routine. When done correctly, the process is odorless. Here's what you'll need for a balcony compost bin:

- A wood or plastic container (potentially free; try to find something from your home)
- Two bricks (\$2)
- Black plastic garbage bag (\$2)



Illustration by Joanna Present Wolfe

- Potting soil (\$2)

- Redworms (\$5)

Good airflow is the most important aspect of your compost bin, both for odor control and to sustain your new set of pets—worms. Keep them alive so that they can do their job—providing nutrient rich soil and a recycling system for your waste.

Start with a container that is at least 2'x2'x2'. Cut holes in the bottom for both aeration and water drainage. Place the box on a few bricks to allow airflow. Sprinkle some potting soil in the box and during the next few days start adding your compost scraps: fruits and veggie scraps, eggshells, tea bags and coffee grounds, leaves, etc. Cover loosely with a black garbage bag. At the end of the week, add more soil and sprinkle water over your emerging pile. Allow a few days for the bacteria to begin to break down your compost scraps.

Now you're ready for your new houseguests. Purchase Redworms (try 503-234-WORM) and introduce them into your pile of scraps. Worms will thrive as long as they are fed with scraps every other day, kept moist—without drenching the pile—and given enough air. As your compost pile grows, continue to turn the soil carefully and watch for dark crumbly soil.

As this point is approaching, remove your worms and place them where their food source can be continued. Finally, treat your other gardening projects to this black gold and take pride in what you've accomplished.**NG**

News Briefs

Nigerian Girl Flogged for Pre-Marital Sex

In late January, a Nigerian teenager was flogged 100 times with a cane for having premarital sex. Bariya Ibrahim Magazu, 17, was punished after a tribunal in the State of Zamfara in September found the pregnant girl guilty of having pre-marital sex. Despite Magazu's claims that she was violated by three men—acquaintances of her father's—the tribunal sentenced her to 180 lashes with a wooden cane. The sentence was initially delayed until Magazu delivered a baby boy on Dec. 4. The number of lashes was later reduced after public outcry from the Canadian government, which called the sentence a violation of human rights accords signed by the Nigerian government. Magazu's flogging was carried out in public, and more than 100 people gathered to watch it, according to news reports. Since the African country returned to democracy in 1999, eight states in northern Nigeria have adopted Sha'ria (Islamic law). Strict punishments are invoked under Islamic law, including hand amputation for robbers and stoning for adultery. The adoption of Islamic law in Nigeria, Africa's most populated country, has divided public opinion among Christians, the majority in the South, and Muslims, which occupy the North. Hundreds of people died in clashes between Christians and Muslims over talks to introduce Sha'ria in neighboring Kaduna State last year. Reports state Magazu was in pain after the flogging, but appeared to suffer no major injuries.-Leah Bobal

Guatemalan Abused Woman Granted Asylum

Rodi Alvarado-Peña, the Guatemalan woman who was granted, then denied, asylum by the US, was given a reprieve on January 19th. Janet Reno, on her last day in office, vacated the ruling that would have forced Alvarado-Peña's deportation to Guatemala and back to her abusive husband. This gives Alvarado-Peña the possibility of benefiting from a new proposed rule prompted by her case that allows victims of domestic violence who cannot obtain protection from their own government to qualify for asylum in the US.

Alvarado-Peña's fate – and that of future asylum seekers – is now in the hands of George W. Bush, who must decide whether or not to implement the proposed rule. -Tamara King

Bush Imposes Gag Rule

On his first day in office, January 21, President Bush reinstated the Reagan-era global gag rule on international family planning agencies. The rule prohibits U.S. family planning assistance to any organization that uses other, non-U.S funds to either provide legal

abortions or to engage in any discussion of the abortion law in its own country. This restriction on free speech would be unconstitutional if imposed on Americans, but will now affect poor, non-U.S. women around the world.

Former President Clinton had rescinded the gag order in 1992. Last year, Congress voted against imposing the global gag rule, but they withheld family planning funds until February 15, 2001. Instead of upholding the bipartisan congressional commitment to support this previously successful foreign assistance program, Bush restored the global gag rule, pleasing right-wing supporters. On February 16, the day that \$425 million appropriated by Congress last year for international family planning programs became available, Sens. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., and Olympia Snowe, R-Maine, in the Senate, and Reps. Nita Lowey, D-N.Y., and Nancy Johnson, R-Conn., in the House, introduced a "Global Democracy Protection Act," that would rescind the rule. At press time, no decision had been made. -Kristin Schuchman

Holiday Combats Violence Against Women

While most people celebrated Valentine's Day, others were recognizing a newer holiday called V-Day, touted as a movement to end violence towards women. Participants produce cultural events to raise awareness and money for existing organizations. A vital, ongoing process that proclaims February 14 as V-Day, the movement seeks to reinvigorate existing efforts and commence new initiatives in publicity, education and law. This year's events included productions of Eve Ensler's play, *The Vagina Monologues*. Wildly successful celebrity performances in New York, London and LA, as well as performances at hundreds of colleges across the country have raised thousands of dollars for local, national and international groups that work to stop violence against women. V-Day 2001 rocked Madison Square Garden on Feb. 10th with an all-day and all-night event, including performances by Oprah Winfrey, Queen Latifah, Glenn Close, Calista Flockhart and Gloria Steinem. Locally, the Women's Resource Center at PCC Sylvania also put on two powerful, sold-out performances of the *Vagina Monologues* on February 16th and 17th. For more information, go to www.vday.org Joanna Present Wolfe & Michelle Milne

Portland Islamic School Grows

In just four years, the Islamic School of the Educational Trust, a Portland elementary school that teaches Arabic and guidance in Islamic principles, has

expanded from a Portland State University basement with twelve students to a 2.5-acre house in Tigard with 49 students. According to the *Oregonian* (January 29, 2001, Sunrise Edition), the school's six-year goal is to expand to twelve grades and enroll more than 300 students. The school's growth reflects Portland's large Muslim population, estimated to be as high as 8,000. Students are given a solid academic foundation in general subjects as well as teachings from the Koran and principles of Islamic faith, such as worship to one God, five daily prayers, and the extension of charity to the less fortunate. - Kristin Schuchman

Women's Crisis Line Breaks Down

On February 9, the Portland Women's Crisis Line, a 28-year-old agency that offered services to victims of domestic violence, shut down. The four-member board and Executive Director Kris Peters fired the agency's staff and then resigned February 13. For the next few weeks other anti-domestic violence organizations started providing services the agency provided, including the 24-hour emergency phone line for victims. The shut-down put the crisis line in breach of its contract with the county, which funds the agency with \$60,000 per year. On February 21, the agency submitted a draft plan to the county for continuing the crisis line in hopes of maintaining its county funding. Conflicts within the organization date back to January 16, the date the staff filed a grievance letter with the crisis line board requesting an outside mediator to improve communications between the staff and Peters. The grievance was dismissed without a hearing. At this printing, the fate of the crisis line remains to be determined, but a temporary board has been assembled to help preserve it. - Kristin Schuchman

International Women's Day of Strike

On March 8th, women around the world were called to go on strike. Activists explained their reasons: "Why go on Strike? Women and girls do 2/3 of the world's work for 5% of the income. 2/3 of this work is unwaged. Strike for: a world which values all women's work and all women's lives; an end to no pay, low pay and too much work; \$800 billion a year is spent on military budgets worldwide; \$80 billion would provide the essentials of life - water, sanitation, basic health, nutrition, education, and a minimum income." For more information on the day's events, see <http://womenstrike8m.server101.com/> -Michelle Milne

Feature Profile

By Michelle Milne

Mirror, Mirror on the Wall

"Royalty is a life-sentence," says Queen Noor of Jordan. But she tackles that sentence with enthusiasm and grace. Although her step-son and his wife now rule Jordan, Queen Noor's commitment to international humane causes did not change with the shift in monarchy.

Her list of credits includes women's economic development, land mine awareness and removal, Jordanian arts, education, health, and cross-cultural understanding. She has founded museums and festivals. She has developed and chaired a wide range of programs for communities, families, and children, both national and international in scope. She has spoken to the UN on globalization, to a conference at the Hague on world peace, and at the invitation of the World Affairs Council in February, a large and appreciative Portland audience on international women's and children's issues.

Queen Noor recognizes women's struggles in many realms, from the refugee who searches for "food, clean water and her husband," to "the woman [who takes] her reputation, her career, and in some cases her safety in her hands by striving to serve her country in public office, and who, having succeeded, realizes that the

papers are commenting more on her hair or the contents of her closets than on her contributions."

The Queen has been called a "leggy blonde." But she has also been called "charming," "genuine," and "brilliant." One needs only look at her work and listen to her words to hear her heart. Her projects tell us her heart is deep; the gold of royalty is in her actions.

Her Majesty was not raised as royalty. Her birth name was Lisa Najeeb Hallaby, born to an Arab-American family in Washington D.C. Her journey led through much of the United States in childhood to Princeton, where she received her degree in Architecture and Urban Planning as part of the University's first coed class. After working on a variety of international planning projects, she became Director of Planning and Design Projects at Royal Jordanian Airlines. In this position, U.S.-born Lisa found herself courted by King Hussein of Jordan himself, who eventually named her Queen Noor (Queen "Light") in that far-off mystical land. It could have been a fairy tale.

But, far from a passive princess whisked off to live happily ever after, Queen Noor's marriage to the King was only the beginning of her role as a protagonist in the story. Through her partnership with King Hussein and continuing independently since his death in 1999, she has challenged preconceptions about beauty, power, and intelligence, exhibiting all three as she leaves her imprint on the world.

Queen Noor projects a humble, down-to-earth image. In reference to the long list of accomplishments that introduced her Portland lecture, she commented, "It's not that much, really, if you look at how all the bits and pieces fit together." She also alluded to the marquee outside the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall, saying with a chuckle, "I'm not used to seeing my name in lights, like a newly released film."

Her Majesty's message is one of womanpower—that what is good for women is good for the community, and for an entire society. "Studies have shown that women, given training and money, often invest in their families," she says, "which leads to cohesiveness of society and the larger quest for equity and peace."

She quotes Mao Tse Tung: "Women hold up half the sky." But she takes it one step further, saying, "If only women held up half the sky – that would be light



King Hussein and Noor's wedding in 1977.

Audience Reactions

[Queen Noor's topic is] a universal condition. The thing about our country is, we haven't had any kind of crisis. Younger people haven't seen it; they don't understand how many gains have been made in the past 30-40 years by the feminist movement. I think we're actually losing ground. I see that in general, in the climate, in "traditional family values," building those up to be an ideal – the things that men espouse to most – the mother at home... It would be wonderful. But when men get tired of acquisitions, there's nothing left. Women fall through the cracks. -Anne Jackson

Any opportunity to hear a perspective like she has is a great opportunity. Even if she can only deal with generalities – it's not something the general media deals with; it's not something we hear about. Just for that, it's valuable. -Kevin Samson

I'm just really pleased to see a woman's voice represented out of the region; to hear a person who's competent on world affairs. It's really important. -Greg Walker

She had an incredible, impressive presence. She is very knowledgeable. I had the same reaction to Gorbachev. What they've accomplished – it makes you feel like you should have worked harder. [She talks about] what does make a community – it's our kids. They're our biggest treasure. -Lisa Lettemaier

You're in awe and at the same time you can relate to her. She's genuine, sincere. I liked how she distinguished "earning mothers" from "working mothers." Every mother is a working mother. -Lan Nguyen

Nice and Nervy

"Just call us two nice old ladies," said one. "Who are very nervy," the other added.

Nice and Nervy 1: She made a tremendous case for the plight of women and children around the world. She speaks as though she's a conservative – she has to, being Muslim, being Queen Noor. But she speaks as a conservative Muslim about all of those [issues] we would call liberal.

Nice and Nervy 2: I am impressed by her knowledge of the universality of issues – how non-isolated the problems are. I join her in her prayer for peace. [The Middle East] is going along toward peace, then it's undone so quickly. It's the fragility of any process. She's a young woman for having had all the experiences that she has. [I was impressed by] her brilliance, her charm. Jordan has led the world in [nonviolence]. It's a spot of peace in that area.

compared to what they now bear." She maintains there is truth in the image of Atlas, the world on his shoulders, then adds, "But they got the gender wrong."

"Women have been given the burden of upholding the world without help, rest, or complaint," she says, "while others run it."

She addresses causes familiar to women all over the

world: domestic violence, death of children by land mines, unaffordable or unavailable medications, poverty, and lack of resources. In some countries, women are terrified if they deliver a girl. For some, HIV medication is worth 30 years of income. Two-thirds of the poor and illiterate in the world are women. Women and children are 85 to 90 percent of civilians killed in armed conflict. As a world leader, and as the mother of four children, Queen Noor addresses these issues because she believes women's rights and plights affect the whole world, family by family and community by community.

She contemplates all the women in the world going on strike, but then concludes, "That's an impossible luxury. Families would go unclothed, unfed, uneducated, unloved, businesses would crash, communities would fall apart... But it wouldn't happen. Women don't have the money or the power to lay down their burdens." And so this stately woman has a plea: "[Women] need and deserve more support, more money, more power, more voice."

When Lisa Hallaby became Her Majesty, Queen Noor of Jordan, she also converted to Islam. She chose a country and a religion quite different from her upbringing. Now she looks to Islam as a model for gender equality. In a 1998 interview with *Al-Arab Al Yawm Newspaper*, she pointed out, "The Holy Qu'ran prescribed the basic rights of Muslim women [in] education, property, inheritance and paid work, centuries before Western women were accorded them," adding that those rights have been misinterpreted by some – both Muslims and non-Muslims – throughout the years.

She also maintains, "These rights enabled Muslim women to play a prominent political role, such as Aisha, the wife of the Prophet [Muhammed], and even economic roles like Lady Shafa', who was appointed

supervisor of the city's financial market."

Women have had equal rights in Jordan's constitution since 1950. Boys and girls are enrolled in schools in equal percentages. She does admit that it is a conservative society, where girls (even her own daughters) sometimes feel "overprotected and constrained,"



Queen Noor joins Jordanian students for National Arbor Day.

especially by male family members (such as their brothers). "Because of conservative traditions, it can seem very unfair to young women," says Queen Noor. "But girls have the same [legal] rights that boys do. It's a family issue – whether they're given freedom to explore all their possibilities or whether they're constrained. In another generation I believe those will open up."

Queen Noor encourages more women to see opportunities in the work force and to become entrepreneurs, while also recognizing their invaluable role in family. She cites studies showing women to be the most reliable creditees in both developed and developing countries. And, returning to her theme, she emphasizes that "credit given to women can transform not only their families but their societies."

tions. She was talking about Muslim society. There is no equality in Muslim countries, at least in the countries I've traveled in.* Those are the places where women are harassed more than any other countries. *(Pakistan, India, Thailand, Malaysia, and others; he is an Austrian native.)

Julie: Pakistan was the most fundamental – I was harassed there all the time, even when I was covered (I guess I was walking like a Westerner or something). Finally I dressed like a man, and they left me alone.

Women can only get on at the front of the bus, and men can only get on at the back. Once I got on at the front, and someone grabbed my collar and pulled me to the back. I turned to him and said, "I'm a woman!" And the whole bus laughed.

The harassment is of Western women – their idea of what a

While championing motherhood as a noble role, the Queen expands women's possibilities, calling them to use their full potential – and calling on the world to make room for that potential.

"As much as [women] do now, it is only a fraction of what they can do. Women can run countries or companies, ignite movements to ban land mines or handguns, give birth to children or global policy. We know, because we've seen them do it. What women need is more support for their right to do all this, and more, if they so desire."

But, some argue, if women move into the workforce, into government, into the world outside the home circle, who will watch the kids? Who will feed and clothe and care for the children; who will then become the adults that make up the social fabric?

Queen Noor finds the answer in the question. Women can't do these things well anyway right now. They are too busy dealing with a world of obstacles. *A State of the World's Mothers Report* in 2000 found motherhood to be "unbearably hard" in the 106 countries studied, says the Queen.

"Poverty, sex trafficking and poor nutrition severely hamper women's ability to participate in making the decisions which most affect their lives," she says. And, by extension, it hampers their ability to contribute to building peace around the world. Speaking at a seminar on micro-enterprise promotion for women in 1997, she maintained, "National development can only truly be called 'sustainable' when it advances the political, social, economic, and personal rights of men and women alike."

The Queen stresses that, given the opportunity, women can work to change the world family by family and community by community, just as they affect the world child by child. And, she says, they should be given voice in matters that concern them. "Women are often the most vulnerable victims during war and the ones left to pick up (continued on page 22)

Western woman is. But equality may be different in different societies. That's the question I wanted answered – if Islam is about equality, how in these other countries could they do what they do?

Julie: Roland says these things, but we are definitely equal in our home. In many countries women do shoulder the burden. Some of that is our fault – we need to stand up for ourselves. And I guess I have the freedom, the ability to say that.

Roland Zehetbauer: It's also partly how you're raised – some [of what Queen Noor said] is true, about women having to do more – it's how your mother was raised and how her mother was raised...

Julie: And that's what she was saying – that if we give women that freedom, they'll flourish. I think she's done amazing things in her country.

A Husband And Wife Reflect on Queen Noor's Message

Julie Zehetbauer: I love what everyone says, but it doesn't tell me how she was going to do it – it's kind of fluff. I felt the same way about Gorbachev – all the speakers here say great things, we all agree, they are really good things. But how will it happen? [I felt that way] until the last question [where she talked about] younger Arabs and Israelis [being] together more than older people did or could. We have to get adolescents at the start.

Roland Zehetbauer: She was pushing it in the first 15 minutes, about women shouldering the whole world. It's more of a joint effort. It has much more to do with individual family situa-

By Joanna Present Wolfe

Setting Intention

Sometimes the circumstances of our lives seem beyond us. "This wasn't supposed to happen. This isn't what I wanted. Why are the gods/goddesses so cruel to me?" Things are different from what we expect. We become disappointed or despairing. We reject the feelings of uncertainty, grief, or shame that come with the unexpected. We want to demonize the person who "made us feel this way" or "did this to us"—anything to avoid the pain of experiencing our feelings.

Faulting the gods, the enemy, the *other* has been a human pattern for a very long time. "*Us vs. Them*" has been the mentality that has determined the course of events in wars of state, of family, and of men and women. Unfortunately, no one ever learns anything in the "blame game," so no one really wins. We are left with a small-minded, ego-based sense of right or wrong. We are left feeling disconnected from other people and the deeper significance of our experience, in a static position of victim or dominator. Our experience is limited, closed, and incomplete.

So what do we do with the anguish of uncertainty, the disruptive feelings that arrive with the intrusion of the new? First, we need to express ourselves. Unexpressed feelings cause not only mental confusion but physical ailments as well. We cry, we scream, we run and dance and make artwork. Then we can stop and ask ourselves some questions:

How is this familiar?

Strong feelings usually relate less to what is happening in the present moment and more to recurring patterns in one's life. A current situation may trigger a feeling from childhood, how we felt in relation to our parents or siblings. Our emotional response in the moment is magnified out of proportion to the situation. Under stress, as adults, we also tend to go on auto-pilot and start acting just like our parents. When we are not mindful, we can easily become our parents, responding to difficult situations with the most familiar set of judging voices, abusive actions, and coping mechanisms.

What about shifting our belief and seeing that we attract the experiences that will teach us what

we need to learn? If we come from the belief that we are here on this planet to become fuller, more evolved human beings, then learning is central to our experience. We co-create with the universe, attracting lessons that will help us grow.

When we come to our lives with the attitude that we are not victims of our circumstances but co-creators, then all experiences become opportunities for developing greater self-knowledge.

"How would I like it to be?"

We all know we want to "be happy" and have things "be wonderful", but what does that mean? Just as we each have different lessons to learn, we have completely different ideas about what is fulfilling in life. Often things have to go wrong before we realize how we really feel and what is important to us. We sometimes have to go without things we care about before we can feel gratitude. Some of this can be shifted if we take the time to visualize what true happiness would look like for us.

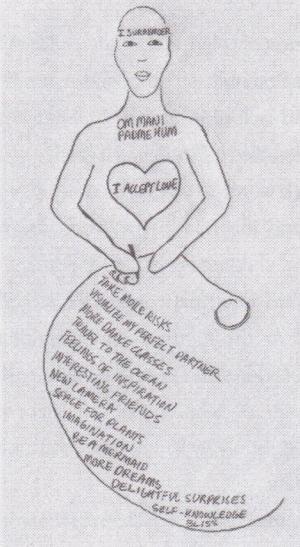
Setting Intention

We all know about New Year's resolutions: "I WILL do this, if it kills me!" We want to change things in our lives; we are determined, and the first thing we do is push. Of course, determined pushing is difficult, artificial, and exhausting—it wears us out. It comes from our heads, not our hearts, and the rewards are never worth the torturous effort. We rarely find success this way.

Intention is different. Setting an intention is not artificially imposing a course of action, but creating a space for the possibility of actually having what we want. Intending is not wishing for something that will always be out of reach, and it is not the same as setting goals. Intending is affirming that what we want and need is coming to us. It is the active part of co-creation with the universe. It is painless. We are not forcing things to happen, but allowing them to. We accept ourselves and our lives as they are, and then we open ourselves to embodying our dreams.

Make a Wish List

Remember making wish lists for Santa when you were little? Make one now. Include every-



thing—nothing is too big or too small, no facet of your life is insignificant. "Interesting friends, drumming lessons, more creativity at work, deeper intimacy, more time alone..." Some items on the list may be easily attainable, others seemingly impossible. Let this be an intention-setting exercise, the first step toward making your life more perfect. Hang your list some place you will notice it often. Carry your wishes with you gently. Allow your dreams to come true.

Invocation

Invoking the spirits is a practice that goes back to the dawn of human culture. The impulse to connect with a higher power is deeply ingrained in our collective psyche. In modern times, religious dogma and the secular dynamics of the church have alienated many of us from the practice of prayer. Even the word prayer has negative connotations for many of us. Yet, asking for help can heal. Our secular, individual-based culture does not offer us many avenues for dealing with emotional and spiritual pain. We are expected to deal with pain and confusion in isolation, maybe with the comfort of friends who can listen.

Meditation, prayer, invocation, or worship by any name acknowledges that forces greater than ourselves can both relieve and give meaning to our difficult experiences. Whatever deity, mantra, chant, or prayer we choose to connect us with a power greater than ourselves is fine. Giving our difficulties over to any higher power is a blessing. It opens space in us for healing and for receptivity to our own inner wisdom. The gods and goddesses can be understood as metaphors for our own higher consciousness, rather than hostile or indifferent "Others." It is a question of honoring ourselves enough to listen. **NC**

Islam 101

By Fariba Armani



History in brief, dating back to Ibrahim (or Abraham), when Sarah could not bear him a child, Ibrahim conceived a child with Hagar, who then bore him a son, Ishmael. Miraculously, Sarah later bore Ibrahim a son as well, Isaac. According to the Qur'an, Sarah demanded that Ibrahim banish Hagar and Ishmael from the tribe and so Ishmael went to the place where Mecca was to rise. His descendants, flourishing in Arabia, became Muslims, whereas descendants of Isaac, who remained in Palestine, gave rise to the Hebrews, who were later called Jews.

The word *Islam* is best translated as "submission," (under the will and guidance of God). But it has a deeper meaning coming from the same Arabic root as *Salam*, or peace, and *Salama*, meaning safety and security. Hence, the word *Islam* explains large parts of the central core of the religion.

Following Ishamel's line in Arabia in the latter part of the sixth century A.D., we find Muhammad, the Prophet through whom Islam reached its definitive form.

Muhammad Muhammad was born approximately 570 A.D. into a leading tribe of Mecca. After losing both parents at a very young age, he was raised by an uncle. He could neither read nor write. Upon reaching maturity, he set out to work in the caravan business where he met his wife Khadija, 15 years his senior.

The first revelation came to Muhammad in 610 through the angel Gabriel. He is known by Muslims as

"The Seal of the Prophets," for they believe that while there had been authentic prophets of God before him, no legitimate prophets will succeed him.

Amid social pressure, Muhammad was forced to migrate from Mecca to Medina three years after he began his prophecy. His migration is referred to as *Hijra*, on which the Muslim calendar is based.

Muhammad died in 632 A.D. and was buried in his home in Medina, Saudi Arabia.

The Holy Book, the Qur'an, meaning "recitations," is the Muslim holy book. Written in Arabic, it is a compilation of the revelations of Muhammad in the period of 610-632. It consists of 114 Suras, or chapters. The Suras are opened by indications on their origin. The origin is either Medina or Mecca. With the exception of the first Sura, Al-Fateha, meaning "the Commencement," the longest Suras are found in the beginning, and then gradually decrease to the end of the Qur'an. The second Sura Al-Baqara, meaning "the Cow," is the longest Sura at 286 verses long, while Sura 114 is only six verses long. The first translation of the Qur'an in another language was Latin in 1143 by a monk.

"The Five Pillars of Islam" are: **1. Shahadah**, or confession of faith is the first creed. It consists of a single sentence stating: "There is no God but God, and Muhammad is his messenger." **2. Salat**, or prayer, is the second pillar of Islam, which requires all Muslims to perform their prayers five times each day while facing Mecca,

A Muslim woman in Indonesia, where the largest number (1.4 billion) of Muslims live.

where *Ka'ba* (the house of God) is located. **3. Zakat**, or alms, prescribes Muslims to share their wealth and comfort with the less fortunate. **4. Sawm** is the fast during the holy month of Ramadhan. For those without medical or health restrictions, no food or drink is to pass the lips from sunrise to sunset. **5. Hajj**, or pilgrimage to Mecca, is required of each Muslim who is physically and economically able, at least once in their lifetime.

There are currently over 1.4 billion Muslims worldwide. Contrary to popular belief, the largest number of Muslims live in Indonesia. **NG**

Islam Glossary

Reprinted directly from: *Islam*, by Ruqaiyyah Macsood, 1994. NTC Publishing Group

Adhan: a call to prayer

Iqamah: the second call to prayer

Muezzin: the person who calls to prayer

Minaret: the tower a muezzin calls from (often mounted with loudspeakers)

The 5 prayers of the day:

Fajr: the pre-sunrise prayer

Zuhur: the mid-day prayer

Asr: the mid-afternoon prayer

Maghrib: the nightfall prayer

Isha: the night prayer

Festivals

Eid ul-Fitr: also known as the "Minor Feast," this follows Ramadan, the month of fasting, and lasts for three days. It is a time of family gatherings and festivities.

Eid ul-Adha: also known as the "Major Feast," this follows the Hajj, the time of pilgrimage to Mecca, and lasts four days. It is a time of spiritual renewal and recommitment.

The Islamic calendar: calculated on a lunar basis, each month has 29 days, 12 hours, and 44 minutes. The festivals come 11 days earlier each year.

Qur'an: also known as the Koran, this is the holy book of Islam. It was revealed by Allah during 23 years to the Prophet Muhammad.

Hadiths: The Prophet Muhammed's own teachings and sayings.

Chador: a covering sheet. It is worn by some women when they are in public and other women only when they pray.

Hijab: a veil or headcovering, varying greatly from culture to culture.

Haram: food or habits that are forbidden.

Halal: food or habits that are permitted. This is a similar concept to the Jewish kosher.

PBUH: "Peace be upon him." A mark of respect that follows references to the Prophet Muhammed.

Shi'ite / Sunni: sects of Islam that have different interpretations and emphasis.

Ummah: the "family" of Islam, the faithful.

Masjid / Mosque: a Muslim place of prayer. It may be a grand and large building or a special room set aside in a household.

Imam: the leader in a Mosque. This is a similar concept to a Protestant Pastor, a Catholic Priest, or a Jewish Rabbi.

By Letha Tawney

Notes from Indonesia

My partner, Brian, and I traveled through Indonesia for a little more than two weeks this winter. We joined my grandmother, who immigrated to the U.S. 27 years ago, on her final visit home. Her goal was to ensure her elderly mother was comfortable and cared for, as Oma will surely pass in the near future. My grandmother also wanted to see her country one more time. We covered a lot of ground, met hundreds of family members, and were overwhelmed by the generosity and openness of the country. Everywhere we went, children approached us, not to beg, but to ask if we could take a picture with them or talk with them. We were welcomed into homes and hosted in a way you rarely find in the States. We called all of our elders aunt and uncle, and all of the children called us Om Brian and Tante Letha. We were fundamentally included, and we learned a great deal.

We were fortunate to catch Indonesia in a short spell between unrest. In November there were massive protests against the government, and they've flared up again since we returned home. It is a country facing issues Americans can barely imagine. (On the other hand, they couldn't understand why we allowed our government to halt the U.S. presidential vote recount. They would never have stood for it, they insisted.) Somehow though, I can't bring the violent images of the riots and the burned-out shops that we passed into line with the tender, open, and generous people we met. I know we've only begun to scratch the surface of a complex culture. Below are excerpts from my travel journal.

"Growing up, the church community was my family's entire social circle. I was at the church building six days a week, usually. It seems like the mosques here are more like public libraries. You go to the nearest one for prayers, but you don't base your social life on it. I haven't heard anyone talk about a particular Imam the way a Western Christian talks about his Pastor. Churches throughout America fulfill their members' needs for community. The congregations meet two, three, or more times a week for functions and socialize on top of that. Here, the extended family seems to be the community. Thirty or more people, related four generations back, gather regularly to eat, talk, and pray. Children are passed back and forth; cousins

come to stay for months. There is a massive network that is family. One doesn't travel to see the sights or 'get away from it all.' One travels almost exclusively to visit more family."

"The men and boys hold babies and do housework here. They cook and no one comments with surprise."

"I feel frumpy, clumsy, and fat next to all these graceful Asian women. They dress up for every event and all I have is 'practical' travelling clothes and no makeup or jewelry! Everything they wear is modest, but graceful and on the far side of ornate. They do enjoy being beautiful!"

"Grandma's comment about white women who travel alone is, 'They're willing to talk to strange men.' Is this a euphemism for 'They'll sleep around?' Maybe, but maybe not. Her complaint about having to ride the inter-city bus was, 'We had to sit next to strangers!', so maybe she just can't understand socializing beyond the vast family structure. If we have to stay in a hotel because there is no family in a given town, it's a hotel recommended by family or run by a distant family branch. Everything from a visit to the corner food stall to a weekend trip out of town is a group event. We've yet to travel in the car with fewer than five people. Restaurants only have long tables seating a dozen or more people. There are no café tables for two. There is no effort to seat couples next to each other or children with mothers. The nuclear family doesn't seem to exist as an entity separate from the extended family. At any given time, a vast array of cousins, aunts, or grandmothers may be staying overnight. In two of the four houses we've stayed in, four generations live together."

"I've seen one stroller in two weeks. I've seen hundreds of small children and only one stroller. There is always an adult to hold the baby or walk slowly with the toddler. To my surprise, not even necessarily the mother! The way men are involved with their children is amazing. They are parents in every sense of the word. Uncles hold babies and grandfathers hug their grandchildren. It breaks my Western heart to see how



Me with a woman named Ayi. During our two weeks in Indonesia, my fiance and I covered a lot of ground, met hundreds of family members, and were overwhelmed by the generosity and openness of the country.

openly kind and loving these men are. They aren't emotionally reserved or cold with their children. They don't negotiate good behavior for material toys, always in a power struggle for control. They interact with and pay close attention to their children, getting astoundingly good behavior in return. These women aren't stuck with the entire burden of raising and managing the children. I was struck today by Nofe squatting behind his two-year-old son, Nino, gently containing Nino's energy in the circle of his arms. Endon - Nino's distant uncle - was also leaning down, talking with Nino and kissing him on the head. In America, two men so distantly related would never have stepped so close to each other, and Endon would never have dared kiss a nephew. How much healthier our culture would be if we would allow our men to feel and be physically connected with those who are important to them. Instead, we imbue every male touch with sexuality."

"There are strict yet implied rules about who sits where in the car. I know this because I'm spending a great deal of this trip in a small SUV. You can't travel 5,000 km at 40 kph and not spend an inordinate amount of time in an SUV, thinking about that SUV and wondering if you'll ever get to see some other aspect of Indonesian culture. Seating in the SUV is strictly divided along gender lines. Everyone is family. (Servants never ride along unless they're needed to drive. When they do ride, they sit in the far back with the luggage.) For instance, my cousin never sits next to her brother-in-law. Her sister (his wife) always sits between them. If a man is driving, everyone offers the front passenger seat to Brian. If a woman is driving he has to sit in the back seat, but only next to me.

(Somehow, I'm never offered the front seat.) I'm the only woman who can sit next to Brian, and I never find myself seated next to my uncles or male cousins. All of this is arrived at with a minimum of fuss and rearranging. One throws age and status as a guest into the mix as well. Grandma is always given what is considered a 'prime' seat. Cries of refusal go up when I offer to sit in the back with the luggage (to avoid the car-sick baby). As a guest, I must at least sit in the back seat. If this is the price one has to pay to avoid the standard suburban, single-passenger traffic jam, it is a truly small price. Jakarta's traffic would be utterly unbearable if every car weren't packed to capacity."

"A young professional woman sought me out today.

husband is probably more involved than U.S. fathers traditionally are. Still, she was concerned they won't grow up believing family was central. The way she phrased her story, it sounded as though she and her husband approach the problem as partners. He's not dictating her career path. It felt as though she was looking for advice; I wish I had the slightest idea what to tell her. I can't say that we Western women have got this figured out. Look at our children, raised by strangers while we pursue our careers. Here family outranks career for both men and women. In Indonesia, both genders take as much time as they can afford from work to be with the family. Does economic development mean that both genders will jump on the

ly beneficial in the homes we've visited. But I wonder what do you do when you don't like your family? How do people who break the social contract, for whatever reason, survive in a culture so completely based on it? Western feminism's deification of self-determination has a much higher price here than it does in the U.S. Duty plays a major role in both gender's lives. But what do you do in cases where the social contract fails? Are abused wives protected by other branches of the extended family or trapped because family is paramount?"

"I had read before I came to Indonesia that women



Three older women, respectfully called *ibus*, in Medan, Sumatra.

She had come over to visit my hostess and 'casually' sought me out in the back yard, usually a space guests don't venture. Attempting to make conversation, I asked about her children and she said she had two, a four-year-old daughter and a two-year-old son. She stressed to me that she and her husband were trying to make a responsible decision about family size. I suspect her small family isn't popular with the older generation. She explained that you had to consider the cost of educating children all the way through university. There is an assumption that her daughter will go to university, just like she has. She seemed to miss her babies a great deal, and she commented that she was worried that they wouldn't love her or bond with her because she was gone so much. I suppose we in the States would think her children are lucky. They're cared for by their grandmothers in their own home. She doesn't work even 40 hours a week and has several statutory and religious holidays. They'll never stay in a Western day care with a 6:1 child to adult ratio. Her

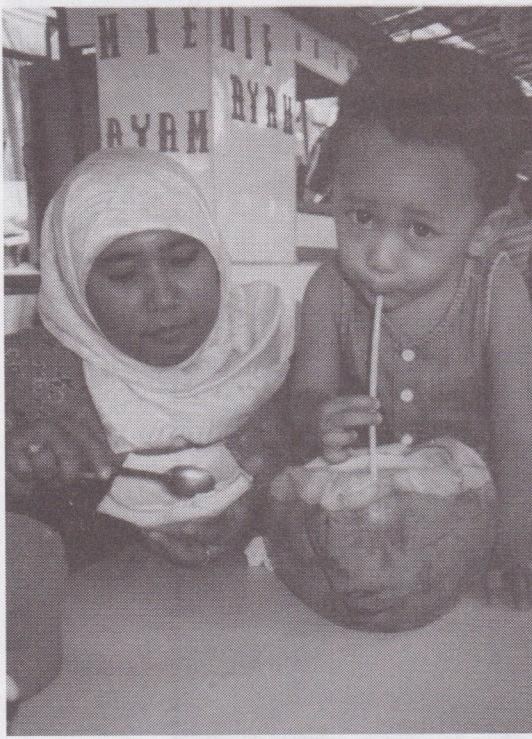
career treadmill of the West? Western Feminism encourages women to find their worth outside the home because Western men traditionally base their own worth beyond the home. If this doctrine takes hold in Indonesia, what will be the cost? How will the extended family structure weather the change? Will it dissolve into the nuclear and then sub-nuclear family units that we are left with? If it does, what will the long-term cost to women be? They'll be 'emancipated', just like we are, but can we even imagine what they would give up in exchange? I worry that we aren't asking the right questions when we approach a developing country with our policies and advice. We look for a specific set of benefits, and when we don't see women gaining those, we tell them they're oppressed. Do we stop to see or value the benefits they already enjoy?"

"One can get quite romantic about extended family, dreaming about being grounded and having roots. The social contract which binds people looks mutual-

were terribly oppressed here. I find it a country of contradictions. The most populous Muslim nation in the world, and the Vice President is a highly popular and powerful woman. Within the families we've stayed with, there are two housewives and six working women. The status ranking in our little car headed north through rural Sumatra is like this: Grandma is the leader. She calls the shots and makes the decisions, including where we'll stop, what we'll eat, when we'll take bathroom breaks. She insists she's not comfortable being the 'leader,' but she seems quite good at it. Grandma's teenage niece, Vita, is next in line, though she's expected to fetch and carry for Grandma as needed. Vita's father is next, and the hired driver doesn't rate because he's not family. One would think age and gender would place Vita's father in the 'leadership' position, especially since Grandma insists she's not comfortable leading, but he's one step up from the bottom. Who's oppressed here? There must be some more subtle dynamic at play than simply gen-

der."

"If a family of eight is living in a 600-square foot space has electricity that flicks off regularly, water that only runs when one turns on the pump in the kitchen, a VCR, and a 30" TV, are they poor? If two of



A woman named Nini with her son Nino in Jakarta. I can't say that we Western women have got this figured out. Look at our children, raised by strangers while we pursue our careers. Here family outranks career for men and women. Both genders take as much time as they can from work to be with the family.

their daughters attend university and have a house servant but have to care for an elderly grandmother and only draw a living from the restaurant they run, are they poor? Travelling through the countryside one tries to deduce what one can about the villages. We've seen three weddings this Wednesday morning. Does that mean times are good or are there always this many weddings? My assumptions about poverty simply don't apply in Indonesia. None of my standard economic indicators make sense. In America, goats and chickens wandering over a single-lane rutted road and between rough wood, slat houses would indicate extreme poverty. Here there is the occasional satellite dish in a yard. The kids walking to their tiny, overcrowded school are in clean and freshly pressed school uniforms. There is no machinery in the rice fields. Would mechanization be economically helpful for the whole community? What would those thrown out of work by the mechanization do for a living? Indonesians have strong opinions about the policies that the IMF is forcing on them, in an attempt to rebuild their economy. Some see a benefit to the

advice (and definitely in the monetary aid); others would prefer to develop the economy themselves. I wonder how effectively organizations based in the West can help. I think they have the potential for tremendous help, in at least avoiding the mistakes we've made in industrialization and energy consumption, but the social structure, religion, ethnic interactions, and world view are fundamentally different here. The economy is terribly complex and utterly different from the one Mr. Greenspan manages in Washington D.C. Any helpful policies will have to be crafted by terribly wise statesmen (and stateswomen, in the case of Vice President Megawati Soekarnoputri) who ask the right questions and don't simply apply doctrinal answers to the issues. If ever Western doctrine is going to fail, it is in tackling the issues facing the developing world."

"It's delightful to be in a place where sex is not used to sell anything. Not even cigarettes, which are advertised absolutely everywhere, including tiny roadside shacks. I've not been assaulted by oversized naked breasts or an airbrushed tush for weeks! We're in the airport ready to fly home and begin to see a broader mix of people. I've been surrounded by covered and yet very individual, beautiful women.

Even the men are dressed modestly, never wearing shorts and rarely wearing short sleeves. We were commenting on how lovely a woman's purple suit was. It was loosely tailored and stretched from ankle to neck to wrist. She wore a matching hijab (head covering), of course. A woman passed us, wrapped up in tight, tiny Western clothes. I was embarrassed by how much skin was on display and thought how ugly she looked, squeezed into those overly tight clothes in this hot climate. You have to be a size six or less to carry off the popular styles, and none of them let you sweat gracefully. An Indonesian baju (pants suit with long matching tunic) and hijab provide women of all sizes and shapes some dignity, allowing them all to be beautiful. The women I've been staying with are not body-conscious. They're not modest in female company and take their bras off at home. Dressing modestly can remove the sexual dynamic from the public context. The feminist in me doesn't want to be told how to dress, but I wonder how much more respect I would get if I reserved the sexual dynamic for my partner alone. Are Islamic women right when they say the hijab forces people to

consider their minds before their looks?"

"I've returned to the damp Northwest and have retreated to my gym in hopes that the sauna will warm my perpetually cold, wet feet. I've been back long enough that I'm not startled by cleavage or aggressive customers in line at the supermarket. I'm confronted by a woman in a full hijab, sitting patiently in the locker room. She's wearing a long wool skirt and a wool sweater. Her head is covered, though differently than the way Indonesians wear the hijab. She feels familiar and comforting in this room full of women stressing about their weight, their tans, and their workout outfits. She seems ancient in this 20s-something crowd with their cell phones and Discmans. I squat down in front of her, below her line of sight, because she's an elder and you shouldn't address elders from above. I say quietly, 'Assalamu 'Aleikum.' 'Peace be with you.' She lights up and reaches her hand out. I take her hand and touch it to my forehead. 'Wa 'Aleikum Assalamu' she replies. 'And with you be peace.' I discover she's Irani and really doesn't speak any English. She wants to know if I'm Muslim, and I explain that I'm not, but have been visiting my Indonesian grandmother who is. She is pleased with a young woman who takes her grandmother seriously and respects older women. While I'm looking up at her face, there is directly behind her, a young white woman in a bikini, just in from the hot tub. Great swaths of skin are visible; in fact, she may as well be naked. Who has the grace and dignity? Who's oppressed and who is free? How can we step up on our self-righteous dais in our bikinis, after sculpting our bodies with starvation, and tell the rest of the women in this world that they don't know true freedom?" **NG**



Who is more oppressed?

News Briefs continued from page 7

Gender Quotas Required for French Elections

With France showing the lowest percentage of female legislators (8.7 percent) out of 15 European countries ranked in a recent report, its lawmakers are looking to improve their standing. An amendment introduced in 1999 and passed into law last May requires political parties to present equal numbers of male and female candidates. Those parties that do not produce an equal number will lose government funding, said Remi Marechaux, deputy spokesperson for the French Embassy in Washington D.C. Officials expect the new law to greatly affect March elections. The report, titled "The European Database: Women in Decision-Making," and financed by the European Commission found that Sweden had the highest percentage of women in its legislature (45 percent) in the year 2000, followed closely by Denmark and Finland. Women filled 13 percent of U.S. Senate positions in 2000.

-Michelle Milne

Event Benefits Walk of the Heroines

On Sunday March 4, 2001 the Oregon Commission for Women (OCFW) and the Portland State University Women's Studies Department (PSU-WS) celebrated Women's History Month and supported PSU's Walk of the Heroines. The event began at PSU's Lincoln Hall with a reception featuring educational booths from the OCFW, In Other Words Books, and PSU Women's Studies. Following a reception at 2 p.m., Monmouth Taiko Drummers, Woodlawn Elementary School African Dance Group and the St. Mary's Girls School Choir performed, and several women gave dramatic readings of "Inspiring Stories of Courage and Vision" about Oregon women. Proceeds from the event benefit PSU's Walk of the Heroines project, a landscaped urban environment designed to honor women's contributions to culture and society. It will serve the PSU and Portland communities and publicly honor and name women who have influenced our lives. -Emily Arion

WITI Portland Chapter focuses on mentoring girls

The Portland chapter of Women in Technology International (WITI) met on February 27th to promote mentoring girls and young women. During a well-attended lecture and fair, speakers emphasized that mentors are vital to young women choosing technical careers. The guest speaker, Wendy Hawkins, is currently the Worldwide Manager of Intel's educational program, *Intel Teach to the Future*, which equips teachers to integrate technology in the classroom. Hawkins explained that 30 years ago she had been attending

Stanford planning to become a medical doctor until she encountered calculus. Feeling overwhelmed and discouraged, she diverted her career into University Administration. Hawkins maintains that early educational decisions can limit career opportunities for women, which, in turn, affect their ability to find financial independence and challenging jobs. Mentors can combat these obstacles by creating opportunities for girls to feel successful in technology and by breaking down the stereotypes surrounding technical work. Hawkins believes that simply providing an example as a fulfilled and successful woman in a technical career can be invaluable to the next generation.

Several local mentorship programs were represented, including 4-H and the Girl Scouts. They were recruiting from the large pool of talented women who attended the lecture. More mentors are always needed.

Girl Scouts, Columbia River Council - provides a summer science camp for 9th grade girls. Contact: Ruth Farmer, 503-620-4567

4-H Web Wizards - provides basic computer and web design skills to Latino youth. Contact: Lisa Conroy, 503-725-2113

Intel Computer Clubhouses - provides kids in under-served areas with technology training. Contact: Ben Nunes, 503-493-3925 x 17

Saturday Academy - provides technical classes and mentorships for girls. Contact: www.ogi.edu/satacad

For more information on WITI, visit www.witi.com

Health Notes by Michelle Milne

■ Over sixty medical, public health and women's groups filed a petition February 12th, endorsed by the American Medical Association, to make Emergency Contraceptives (EC's) available over-the-counter in the United States. The FDA must respond within 180 days of the petition's filing.

■ Senators Reid (D-NV) and Snowe (R-ME) introduced a bill in January that would require health insurance coverage of birth control. Currently, many plans cover Viagra, abortions, and sterilization, but approximately two-thirds do not cover contraceptives.

■ Researchers at University of Colorado found that, of 198 women (ages 65-84) with breast cancer, 102 were treated with mastectomy although only 22 had clinical indications for mastectomy. The other 96 were treated with lumpectomy. Having a female doctor, higher education, being older than 75, and being given more information by the physician were all associated with a higher chance of treatment by lumpectomy.

■ Of 504 lesbian and bisexual women who responded to a Brown University anonymous questionnaire, a majority reported engaging in risky sexual behavior, including involvement with multiple partners and potential exchange of bodily fluids. Despite the risks, most did not consider themselves at high risk for HIV

and other sexually transmitted diseases.

■ The use of and exposure to hair dyes may increase the risk of bladder cancer in women who use them, says a study at the University of Southern California. Barbers and hairstylists showed 50% more risk, while women who dyed their hair were two to three times as likely to develop bladder cancer. Previous studies by the National Cancer Institute and the American Cancer Society showed no links between dyes and cancer, and some professionals question the validity of the USC findings.

■ The *Journal of Midwifery and Women's Health* published a report by researchers from the University of Maryland that found homicide to be a leading cause of death for pregnant women. Victims were more likely to be teenagers (15-19), killed with a gun, and killed in the early stages of pregnancy, the study said.

■ Risks are higher for women taking prescription drugs than for men, concludes a study commissioned by a bipartisan group of legislators. Over the past five years, eight of the ten drugs removed from the market have posed greater risks for women than for men, the study found. The group attributes this discrepancy to scarce research on gender-specific responses to drugs, and asks for more thorough research on those differences prior to FDA approval.

■ In the January issue of *Obstetrics and Gynecology*, a study found that contraceptives (both FDA-approved and non-approved) are available over the Internet with little or no proof of credentials from "physicians" dispensing them.

■ On February 6th, Senator Hutchinson (R-AK) introduced a bill that would severely limit the number of physicians authorized to administer RU-486 (the recently FDA-approved medical abortion pill). Although Hutchinson introduced the bill last year as well, he now has strong backing in the House and the White House. Bush's appointee to the Health and Human Services Secretary position, Tommy Thompson, supports restrictions on RU-486. Despite favorable reports in most areas, Thompson faces criticism from abortion-rights backers. He has little experience in the health arena, and has signed some of the most stringent abortion laws during his long-term governance of Wisconsin. **NG**

For Updates on Events and News, check out nervygirlzine.com

Nervy Calendar

What's Happenin'

Art

Ongoing

Red Hots!
Hot-worked red-glass goblets, vessels, sculptures etc.
Firehouse No. 12 Glassworks & Gallery
518 Main Street
Vancouver, WA
360-695-2660
info@fh12.com

February 27 - March 31

New Drawings, Dave Darragh,
Wetlands, Barry Pelzner
Oil Crayon Drawings
Froelick Gallery
817 SW 2nd Avenue
503-222-1163

February 27 - March 31

Recent Paintings, Liza VonRosenstiel
Pulliam Deffenbaugh Gallery
507 SW Broadway
503-228-8208

February 28 - March 31

The Leaf Heads, Jim Rittmann
Sculpture/Creatures
Pulliam Deffenbaugh Gallery
522 NW 12th Avenue
503-228-6665

February 28 - March 31

Recent Drawings, Watercolors & Jewelry, Roger Kukes
Watercolors & Monoprints, Royal Nebeker
Augen Gallery
817 SW 2nd Avenue
503-223-9510
www.augengallery.com

March

Paper Light / Decorative Sculpture
The Real Mother Goose
901 SW Yamhill
503-223-9510
www.therealmothergoose.com

March 1 - 31

Peace Corps Exhibit
Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center, Upstairs Gallery
5340 N. Interstate
www.peaccorpsmuseum.org

March 1 - 31

New Paintings, Andrea Schwartz-Feit
Proverbs, Betsy Wolfson
Recent Sculptures
Paintings, Tori Ellison
Segment, Ann Carstenson
Alysa Duckler Gallery
1236 NW Hoyt
503-223-7595

March 1 - 31

37 Years of Hot Glass
Fritz Dreisbach
Margo Jacobsen Gallery
1039 NW Glisan
503-224-7287
www.margojacobsengallery.com

March 1 - April 21

Moments of Light
Erika Blumenfeld
Polaroid Composites
2-6 p.m., Wed.-Sun.
PICA
219 NW 12th Avenue
503-242-1419

March 1 - April 28

Theater of Memory (*Secret Shadows*)
Fernanda D'Agostino
Installation
Surroundings, Stephen Hayes
Recent paintings
Elizabeth Leach Gallery
207 SW Pine Street
503-224-0521

April

Zweifel Art Glass
Real Mother Goose
901 SW Yamhill
503-223-9510

Business & Finance

March 13

Planning Your Business
6:30- 9:30 p.m.
PCC Small Business Development Center
503-987-5080

March 15

6:30- 9:30 p.m.
Small Business Mgmt. QuickStart Program
PCC Small Business Development Center
503-987-5080

March 20

6:30- 9:30 p.m.
Financing Your Start-Up
PCC Small Business Development Center
503-987-5080

March 21

Stephen Covey
Leadership is a Choice: The Four Roles of a Leader
PCC's Institute for Management and Professional
Development, Lessons in Leadership Program
Portland Center for the Performing Arts
1111 SW Broadway, Tickets: 800-873-3451
www.lessonsinleadership.com

March 21

Pacific Northwest Financial Conference 2001
8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Oregon Convention Center
Columbia-Willamette Chapter
Association for Corporate Growth
ACG members: \$260 Non-members: \$285
(503) 768-4299
www.acgportland.org/conference

March 22

Marketing to the Government
6:30- 9:30 p.m.
PCC Small Business Development Center
503-987-5080

Discussion Groups

March 10

International Women's Day
Iranian Women's Association of Oregon
TBA, Contact the IWAO at 503-297-6816

Earth Day Events

April 28

The Procession of the Species,
The Natural Living Fair
10 a.m., 503-203-5381
www.earthandspirit.org

Film

Ongoing

Silent film group
TBA
Info: Nancy at 503-775-2048

March 13

The Engagement Party by William Azaroff
Distinguishing Features regional film series
7:30 p.m.
The Seattle Art Museum, 206-675-8730
www.thewarrenreport.com

April 17

Short Spot: The Evolution of Serge Gregory
Rare shorts from Serge Gregory
Distinguishing Features regional film series
7:30 p.m., The Seattle Art Museum
206-675-8730
www.thewarrenreport.com

Please note that these dates, times, and places are all subject to change. If you have an event you'd like listed in the Nervy Girl! calendar, e-mail your event's date, time, location, and phone number to NervyGirlCalendar@hotmail.com, or call (503) 256-3789, or mail to: P.O. Box 16601, Portland, OR 97292.

Spiritual

March 8 (ongoing)

Family & Seniors Potluck
6:30 p.m. Thursdays
Andisheh Center
8605 SW Beaverton Hillsdale Highway
(503) 297-6816
andisheh@andisheh.org

March 8, 15, 22, 29, April 5, 12, 19, 26

Hypnosis Seminars
7 p.m., 200 E. 25th Street, Vancouver, WA
360-892-5323 or 503-309-8125

March 8 - April 19

Introducing Buddhist Psychology: Loneliness and Relationships
7:30 - 9:15 p.m. Thursdays
HealthQuest, 1330 SE 38th Ave.
Contact the Mahasiddha Center (503) 233-6747;
info@mahasiddha.net

March 10 (ongoing)

Kanoun's weekly gathering
1 p.m. Sundays
Andisheh Center
8605 SW Beaverton Hillsdale Highway
(503) 297-6816
andisheh@andisheh.org

March 17, 31, April 14, 28

Mini-Psychic Fairs
1 - 5 p.m., 200 E. 25th Street, Vancouver, WA
360-892-5323 or 503-309-8125

March 13

Chahar Shanbeh Suri (Festival of the Red Wednesday)
TBA: Early celebrations
Andisheh Center
8605 SW Beaverton Hillsdale Highway
503-297-6816
andisheh@andisheh.org

March 17

Norouz Festivity
9p.m.-1a.m. TBA
Iranian Professional Society of Oregon (IPSO)
Contact Andisheh Center
503-297-6816
andisheh@andisheh.org

March 18 - April 22

Eight Steps to Happiness
11:00 a.m. - 12:30pm Sundays
Mahasiddha Center
3453 NW Thurman St., Portland;
503-233-6747
info@mahasiddha.net

March 24

Norouz (Persian New Year) Celebration
7-11 p.m.
Smith Center Ball Room
Portland State University
Contact Kazem Tehrani, Persia House
503-725-5214
tehrank@im.pdx.edu

May 15

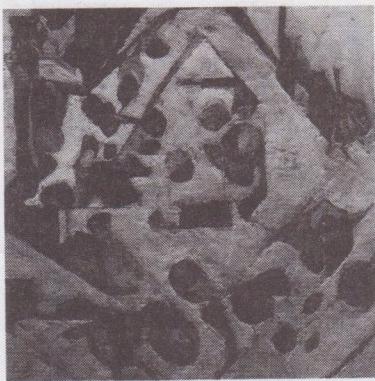
Ethics for a New Millennium
His Holiness the Dalai Lama, speaker
The Northwest Tibetan Cultural Association's Pathways to Peace celebration, and World Affairs Council of Oregon
503-988-5123
www.worldaffairsoregon.org
www.nwtca.org

Sports & Outdoors

Nightly

Mt. Hood SkiBowl City League Ski Racing 2001
7 p.m. start gate
Training available Wednesdays
Aque Racing
Mt. Hood Skibowl Winter/Summer Resort
City League
87000 E. Highway 26, Gov't Camp, OR
503-222-BOWL, Ext. 9

Nervy Calendar



Fruitful, a painting by Andrea Schwartz-Feit,
featured at Butters Gallery.

March 13

Portland Bicycle Advisory Committee meeting
7 - 9 p.m.
Portland Building, 2nd Floor, 1120 SW Fifth,
Roger Geller, 503-823-7671
www.bta4bikes.org

March 14

Multnomah County Bicycle Advisory Committee
7 p.m.
Metro Regional Center, 600 NE Grand Ave., Portland;
April Siebenaler, 503-248-5050

April 28

Procession of the Species parade, an Earth Day event.
Contact Earth and Spirit Council 503-452-4483, Ext. 3
www.earthandspirit.org

April 1

Awards Banquet
Mt. Hood Ski Bowl City League Racing
7 p.m. in the Multopor Lodge
87000 E Highway 26
Gov't Camp, OR
503-222-BOWL, Ext. 9

April 14, 21, 28

Women's United Soccer Association (WUSA)
professional league televised on TNT
4/14; 2 p.m. Bay Area CyberRays vs. Washington
Freedom
4/29; 1 p.m. New York Power vs. Atlanta Beat
4/28; 12 p.m. Washington Freedom vs Carolina Courage
www.wusaleague.com

Theater & Performance

Till March 17

Antigone
"Radically resurrected" by Nancy Keystone
Portland Center Stage, 1111 SW Broadway
503-274-6588, www.pcs.org

Till March 24

The Trial
Adapted from Franz Kafka's novel by Andre Gide
Cygnet Theatre, 116 NE Russell St.
503-295-3555

March 2 - 24

Revenger's Tragedy
Stark Raving Theatre
Theater! Theatre!
3430 SE Belmont
503-242-0080
www.starkravingtheatre.org

March 8 - April 14

No Can Do
Written and Directed by Carol Triffle
Imago Theatre
17 SE 8th
503-231-9581

March 18 - April 29

The Weir
Artists Repertory Theatre
1516 SW Alder Street
503-241-1ART

March 23 - 24

The Swan Tool by video artist Miranda July,
live score by DJ Zac Love
"Live movie" multi-media performance about a
woman who buries herself in her backyard.
8 p.m., Scottish Rite Center
U.S. Premiere presented by PICA
503-242-1419

March 25

Spill It!
Produced by Heidi Carlson
Back Door Theatre ADDRESS?
503-235-4248

March 27 - April 22

A New Brain, a comedy by William Finn,
directed by Chris Coleman
Portland Center Stage
(503) 274-6588
www.pcs.org

April 3

Grupo Corpo
White Bird/PSU Dance Series
Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall
SW Broadway and Main
503-224-8499
800-992-8499 outside Portland

April 13 - 14

Asphalt
Jane Comfort and Co. (with DJ Spooky, poet Carl
Hancock Rux, folkrocker Toshi Reagon)
Musical theater, contemporary movement, DJ sampling,
jazz, trip hop, & Zuni mysticism.
PCC Sylvana Performing Arts Center
Contact PICA
503-242-1419
www.pica.org

April 13 - 29

The Memory of Water
Portland Actors Conservatory
1436 SW Montgomery, 503-274-1717

April 13 - May 6

The Ride Down Mt. Morgan
Profile Theatre Project
Theater! Theatre!
3430 SE Belmont
503-242-0080

April 13 - May 20

King Lear
Tygres Heart Shakespeare Co.
Dolores Wimminstad Theatre
SW Broadway and Main
503-288-8400
www.tygresheart.org

April 19 - May 27

Frogz
(Formerly Frogs, Lizards, Orbs and Slinkies)
Imago Theatre
17 SE 8th
503-231-9581

April 20 - May 19

Veronica's Position
Triangle Productions / Theater! Theatre!
3430 SE Belmont
503-239-5919
www.tripro.org

Volunteers

March 10 - 11 (ongoing)

Cat Adoption Team (CAT)
Adoption hours: 1 - 5 p.m. weekends or by appointment.
Volunteers welcome
503-925-8803

Till May 12

32rd Annual Fur Ball Fundraiser
Feral Cat Coalition of Oregon
Call Karen Kraus, 503-797-2606
www.feralcats.com

Words

March 10

International Women's Day Celebration
Celebrate women publishing. Activities: contribute to
collaborative zine & audiozine etc.
Noon to 6 p.m., Independent Publishing Resource
Center, 917 SW Oak Street, #218, 503-827-0249
www.IPRC.org

March 23

Elana Dykewomon
Activist author of *Beyond the Pale*
7:30 p.m.
In Other Words
3734 SE Hawthorne Blvd.
503-232-6003
www.inotherwords.org

March 28

Jenny Scholten
Author of *Day Stripper*
7 p.m.
In Other Words
3734 SE Hawthorne Blvd.
503-232-6003
www.inotherwords.org

April 1

Poetry Night
Room 158, Cramer Hall,
Portland State Univ.
Hosted by Persia House every 1st Sunday.
For details, contact Kazem Tehrani
503-725-5214
tehrank@pdx.edu

March 12 - April 16

Language of Poem/Poetry (zabane zhe'r)
Literature workshop series - four sessions
with Ebrahim Mokalla (in Farsi)
7-9 p.m.
Andisheh Center
8605 SW Beaverton Hillsdale Highway
503-297-6816
andisheh@andisheh.org

March 12

Claudia Rankine and Matthew Rahrer
Literary Arts, Inc. Poetry Series
First Congregational Church
1126 SW Park
503-227-2583

March 12

An Evening with George Mitchell
Former U.S. Senator
Atkinson Lecture Series
Smith Auditorium, Willamette University
503-370-6267

March 26

Louise Gluck
First Congregational Church
1126 SW Park
503-227-2583

April 3

2001 Children's Author Lecture
Newberry-winner Katherine Paterson, speaker
7:30 p.m.
First Congregational Church,
1126 SW Park Ave.
Ticket info: Multnomah Cty. Library
503-988-5402

April 12

Writers Talking: Irradiated Poets
7 p.m., Bank Room
Multnomah Cty. Library
801 SW 10th Ave., 503-988-5123

April 23

Terry Gross, NPR Host and Journalist
Portland Arts and Lectures Series
Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall
SW Broadway and Main, Sold Out

April 24

Writers Talking: Oregon Press Women
7 p.m., Bank Room, Multnomah Cty. Library
801 SW 10th Ave., 503-988-5123

Workshops

March 1, April 2

Workshop registration begins
for Multnomah Community Television
Mt. Hood Community College campus
Volunteer Coordinator, 503-491-7636, ext. 326
www.mctv.org

March 11

Finding a Creative Job
Vicki Lind & Gail Nicholson (The Saavy Group)
833 SW 11th, 10th floor
Reservations: 503-227-4250

March 17-18 or April 7-8

Intro to Glassblowing, Part I

March 24-25 or April 21-22

Intro to Glassblowing, Part II
Firehouse No. 12 Glassworks & Gallery
518 Main Street, Vancouver, WA
360-695-2660, info@fh12.com

Nervy Workshops

Our April Work shop is "Financial Health" and is scheduled for Saturday, April 21. The course will be in two parts on the same day—Smart Women Get Rich with Bruce Kent of Edward Jones Investments and Personal Money Management with Lynn Conway, a banking industry veteran with an accounting and tax background. Don't miss out on this tremendous opportunity to manage your financial future. Check out the March issue, coming soon for registration details. Info can also be found on our website www.nervygirlzine.com

Registration: Class maximum is 30, so register by April 11 with Robyn Fountain, Workshop Coordinator, by phone at 503-289-6566 or e-mail:

NervyGirlWorkshops@hotmail.com

Include your name, address, and phone number. She will provide details.

Psychic Fair

A Mini-Psychic Fair Every-other Saturday, beginning March 17, 2001. You could choose from some of the following:

Numerology Medicine Cards Tarot Angel Cards

Russian Gypsy Cards Psychometry Astrology Palmistry

Only \$25 - 15 min reading \$3 admission at the door

Join us from 1:00pm to 5:00 pm

Uptown Village Health Center, Lower Level

Healing Energies Massage Therapy

200 E 25th St. (Corner of 25th & Broadway)

Downtown Vancouver, WA 98663

By Nadia Maiwandi

True Islam vs. the Taliban

Throughout its history, Afghanistan has been the target of foreign greed and competition due to its cultural achievements and prime location. Early conquerors such as Alexander the Great and Genghis Khan vied for control of the land and its people. In the 19th century, Afghanistan and much of central Asia served as an imperialistic chess game for Britain and Russia.

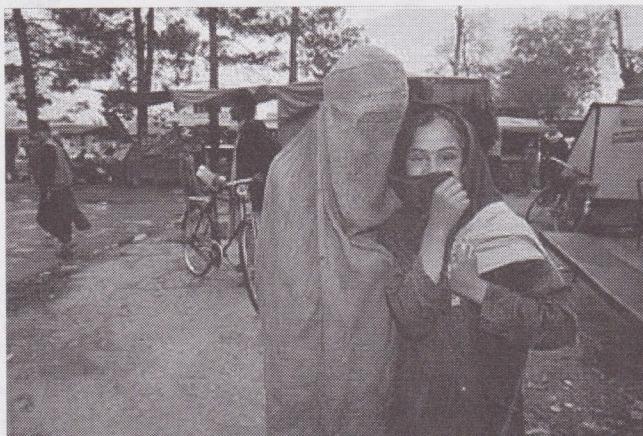
Today, Afghanistan continues to face foreign interference. The U.S. and the U.N. repeatedly take violent actions against the Middle East in the form of war and sanctions, and Middle Eastern opposition—whether deliberate violence or peaceful protest—is depicted by the government-fed American media as unwarranted terrorist frenzy, turning the public mind against Middle Eastern people.

The Hidden Islam

Because the media often latches on to the actions of extremist groups such as the Taliban and rarely talks about the true beliefs of the Muslims, there are many misconceptions about women's rights in Middle Eastern countries and Islam. Contrary to popular belief, the oppression of women in Middle Eastern countries is not tied to Islam. In truth, women receive 600 fundamental rights, just as men do. Afghan Online Press writes, "Fundamental rights were given to [women] over 1,500 years ago. Muslim women have the right to own property, choose their own partners, divorce, [have an] abortion when necessary, [acquire an] education, and [gain] sexual satisfaction in marriage. What other religion allows a woman to divorce her husband if he is not performing in the bedroom? There is also a misconception that the hijab, the covering of Muslim women, must be worn over the face. But the Qur'an actually dictates that the woman's body, head and hair be covered, similar to a nun's habit. The reason for the hijab, as well as for asking men and women to wear loose and modest clothing, was to focus the faithful toward higher aspirations, such as intellect and charity. However, by mid-20th century, most countries viewed forcing a woman to cover herself as oppressive and left

it to her choice.

When the Islamic people began mimicking fashion trends and ideologies of the West, many viewed these changes as progress. Others, however, saw it as a threat to the traditional culture and called for a return to their roots. Unfortunately, the movement did not stop with Islamic pride, but instead turned into an abuse of power against Muslims who did not practice the same



Teenagers in Kabul in 1995 in the Sha-Re-Nau district. The teenager on the left is wearing a burqa as decreed by Taliban rule.

brand of Islam as those in political control.

Afghanistan and the New Invasions

In 1978, the Soviet Union overthrew the Afghan government and set up a communist "puppet" government. With no official army left to fight the takeover, the Mujahideen, or "freedom fighters," took arms and went to war with the Communists. The Soviets imposed 11 years of war and oppressive rule on Afghanistan. Thousands of Afghans fled seeking solace in neighboring countries and abroad. More than one million Afghans were killed in the war, many of them innocent civilians and children. In just one day, the Soviets killed 28,000 Afghans. So many Afghans died that day "there was no one to bury them," says Zieba Shorish-Shamley, Ph.D. Shorish-Shamley was a student in the U.S. during the invasion and co-founded the Afghan Relief Committee, Madison Chapter, in 1978 to protest what was going on in her country. During this time, the United States poured billions into the extremist Mujahideen groups. The U.S. didn't support the pro-democratic Afghan groups because those groups refused to be "puppets" for the United States and other foreign interests, says the Revolutionary Association of Women in Afghanistan

(RAWA), a feminist group started in Afghanistan in 1977. "The CIA was/is the godfather of all extremist groups around the world, and this has been exposed by high-ranking U.S. policymakers," says RAWA. In 1989, after more than a decade of war, the Soviets were finally forced out. When they left, so did the American money. "The whole problem is," says Shorish-Shamley, "right after the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan.... The United States completely cut the support to the Afghans. This is at a time when the country is completely destroyed, all our infrastructure, education, everything...." With the withdrawal of American money, neighboring countries, such as Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and India saw the vulnerable Afghanistan as a good opportunity. They moved in and aided different Mujahideen groups to take control, causing Afghans to fight against each other. Once again the Afghans were being used as pawns in a war over which they had no control.

The Taliban grew from this chaotic atmosphere and are the most extreme group. When the Mujahideen proved to be ineffective, RAWA says, the U.S., Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia "replaced them with a new ultra-[extremist] group, the Taliban." Not much is known about the Taliban other than they were able to do what the most powerful country in the world was not able to—defeat the Mujahideen. They refer to themselves as "religious students," but are a militia trained and protected in Pakistan and generously funded by the U.S. and Saudi. Most are not Afghan; they are Pakistani, Saudi—even Russian and Chinese. Many who are Afghan are the children of refugee camps—trained and indoctrinated from a young age. In 1994, the Taliban overtook Kandahar and then captured Herat in 1995, with the help of Pakistan. In September 1996, they took the capital, Kabul, and seized control of Afghanistan. Things would never be the same.

The Extremists and the New Rules

The Order threw everything into confusion. Children stopped playing. They were no longer allowed to smile. At every moment it was forbidden, forbidden to enjoy life, to joke, to laugh, to kiss each other in the groves. Forbidden, all what the Great Conqueror disliked, was forbidden.

- Said Bahaudin Majrouh, Afghan poet

The Taliban are known for their crimes against humanity and highly inaccurate interpretations of the Qur'an. As they conquered region after region, they enforced brutally oppressive edicts, targeting women especially. Girls were no longer allowed to go to school and women were forced out of work. Thousands of widows (due to 23 years of war)—and women who have disabled men to care for (the Soviets planted 10 million landmines in Afghanistan, many of which are still active)—are the sole support of their families and have been forced into a life of beggary and prostitution. Women are not allowed to receive medical help from male doctors, and most of the female doctors have left the country. Women are now forced to wear burqas, a cumbersome garment that completely covers the body and face, with only mesh to see and breathe through. They cannot leave their homes without a male relative and must allow a man to speak for them

in public. To further their invisibility, women must paint their home windows black.

RAWA says, "The extremists have formed a state where women are seen as subhuman creatures whose role is to satisfy men's sexual needs, procreate, and handle domestic affairs. The restrictions are imposed because anything female is seen as tempting a man to depart from his duties to God."

In a few short years, women have become completely removed from society. Before Taliban rule, women were an integral part of the community: 70 percent of schoolteachers and 50 percent of university students were women. They enjoyed the same freedoms as men and made up 50 percent of the civilian government workforce. By Taliban decree, they have no rights or voice at all.

Many other random edicts have been imposed such as laughing is now against the law, as is kite flying, sports, television, music, and books. Citizens who violate these orders are publicly beaten, arrested, or executed. The Taliban now control 90-95 percent of Afghanistan. The opposition force, the Northern Alliance, controls the rest. Unlike the Taliban, the Northern Alliance are Afghans, and reports tell that conditions are better in these areas, as schools are still open, and women are allowed to work and walk freely.

But they are in threat of falling to the powerful Taliban.

Horrors and Hypocrisy of the Taliban

The Taliban have taken the cruelty and oppression of women to a new height while the rest of the world sits by and watches. Although Islam dictates that all crimes be tried in court, the Taliban have taken to gunning down "sinners" in the street. One woman was gunned down on the street for walking alone without a male relative—she was taking her sick toddler to the hospital. Another was shot dead because her ankles were showing while she and her husband were bicycle riding. Decaying corpses hang from street poles to show the citizens who is boss. The Taliban break into homes, killing the men and gang raping the women, with children watching, in the name of Islam. Women are taken as captives, married off to the Taliban or sold into prostitution. Boys, as young as 10, are kidnapped and forced into war against the Afghan people. People disappear off the street, young and old, male and female, without a trace.

Due to the efforts of the self-proclaimed "pure" Taliban, Afghanistan is now the number-one drug-producing country, particularly of opium. Drug addiction is on the rise, and farmers have taken to planting poppies instead of food because it is the only way they can make a living.

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Twenty ethnic groups represent the Afghan people. Those who are not of the same groups as the Taliban are in jeopardy. Hazaras, who are of Afghan and Chinese descent, are especially targeted. In four days in 1998, between 5,000 and 8,000 Hazaras were slaughtered because of their ethnicity. In the International Herald Tribune, Rupert C. Colville writes, "Many were executed in their own homes....Some were boiled or asphyxiated to death after being left crammed inside sealed metal containers....The bodies of many of the victims were left on the streets...as a stark warning to the city's remaining inhabitants. Horrified witnesses saw dogs tearing at the corpses, but were instructed over loudspeakers and by radio announcements not to remove or bury them."

Colville says the massacre did not grab the world's attention because more important things were going on "such as the Monica Lewinsky revelations [and] football games." The atrocities were "brushed aside" particularly "by the influential American press," he says. There have been other massacres: A mass grave in Dasht Laila was found with several thousand bodies; another was found in Pash Kanda with 600 skeletons.

The Refugee Camps

Many Afghans who manage to escape from the country find the conditions at the camps even worse and end up going back to Afghanistan. The camps offer no provisions: no toilets, no medicine, inadequate shelter, and barely any food or drinking water. The camps are located in very hostile, barren land, which is boiling hot in summer and extremely cold in the winter. The Associated Press reported on Jan. 31, 2001 "at least 110 people died in just one night because of freezing conditions in refugee camps....They had only plastic sheets to keep them warm as temperatures plunged to minus 13 Fahrenheit....An emergency U.N. appeal for \$3.5 million to house and clothe an estimated 80,000 Afghans seems to have been largely ignored." Another 504 died later that week; most were children. Neighboring countries are closing their borders to Afghan refugees. Ten thousand people are currently in between Afghanistan and Tajikistan, not allowed to enter the refugee camps and in danger of being gunned down if they return to their homeland. Many are reported to be living out of holes dug in the ground and eating grass to stay alive.

The Journal of the American Medical Association visited Kabul and some camps in Pakistan in 1998 to check on the condition of women's health and human rights in Afghanistan. They were shocked by what they

found. "Sixty-two percent [of the women] reported that they were employed before the Taliban takeover" but now barely eek out an existence. A large majority reported declines in physical and/or mental health status. Nearly half reported symptoms of post-traumatic



This woman begs for change while her baby sleeps on her lap.

stress disorder, and an overwhelming 97 percent had symptoms of major depression. "Afghans remain the United Nations High Commission on Refugees' largest single caseload of refugees in the world for the 17th year in succession," the report concluded.

The U.S. Government and Inaction

In 1991, the United States and the U.N. launched a full-out attack on Iraq for invading Kuwait, claiming it was to save the people of Kuwait and not for its own interests. Yet little is being done about the current atrocities in Afghanistan. Interest in the area has been extremely low until recently when "the newly freed Central Asian countries, such as Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, [have been found to have] a tremendous amount of natural resources, especially gas and oil. So the U.S. became interested [in this region] again," says Dr. Shorish-Shamley, now founder of WAPHA, Women's Alliance for Peace and Human Rights in Afghanistan. The Taliban will gain \$100 million if they work with the U.S.—the U.S., avariciously sponsoring brutal murderers, will make much more.

U.S. Congressman Dana Rohrabacher addressed the Congress in 1999 about the Afghan crisis, saying, "What has happened during the past few years under Taliban rule is a tragic perversion of Afghan culture and religious heritage." He charges that no supposed "student militia" could wipe out "very seasoned former Mujahideen fighters" without a lot of financial backing and suspects U.S. involvement.

Rep. Rohrabacher added that the State Department undercut his efforts to provide medicinal supplies to the Hazara ethnic group during a Taliban-imposed blockade. The State Department, he said, was in effect assisting the Taliban's inhuman blockade intended to starve out communities that opposed their dictates.

Because the U.S. government has a vested interest in keeping the Taliban in place, American news does not report on the crisis and many people remain uninformed. Organizations like WAPHA, RAWA, Afghan Online Press, and the Feminist

Majority Foundation aim to educate people. WAPHA calls for the U.N. to impose sanctions on Pakistan and other countries that support the Taliban. WAPHA also calls for Afghan women to be involved all steps of the peace process, as they make up the majority of the population and have been hurt most severely. The women's organization also asks that the Afghan people be allowed to democratically elect their own Afghan leaders instead of being controlled by outside dictators.

Nafissa Rashidi, a Los Angeles resident who moved from Kabul over 30 years ago, says it hurts her when she hears what is going on in her old homeland. "It makes me sick," she says. "This is not the Afghanistan I know. What these Taliban are doing to people is genocide and against Islam and general humanity. But no one does anything about it because Afghanistan is a poor country—there is no oil or gold. There is only people." **NG**

For more information on the conditions in Afghanistan, please see these websites:

Women's Alliance for Peace and Human Rights in Afghanistan (WAPHA)

www.wapha.org

WAPHA has many informative articles on Afghanistan, testimonials, poetry, and drawings. You can join the e-list and receive the latest news on the conditions. To get involved in the Portland chapter of WAPHA, email Lesley at info@wapha.org.

Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA)

www.rawa.org

RAWA offers a huge website with many articles from national and international press and many pictures of the current conditions.

Afghan Online Press

www.afghan-web.com

This comprehensive site features politics, pictures, essays on sports, history, video clips of current conditions, an online bookstore, the reports on the suffering of Afghan women, and a lot more.

Feminist Majority Foundation

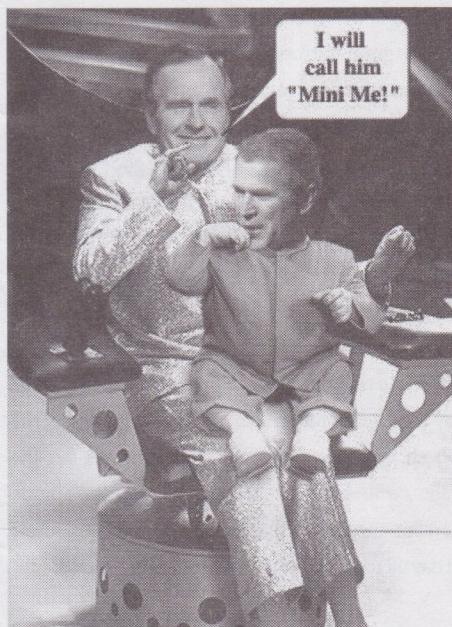
www.feminist.org/afghan/intro.asp

This site includes news from Afghanistan, ways to get involved, and features beautiful crafts made by women in refugee camps. All proceeds go to help Afghan women and girls. The crafts are of high quality and take only a couple of weeks to receive.

Afghan women do not have a voice to fight against their oppressors. Please use your voice to educate those around you and fight for justice.



AUSTIN, Tx (Dec. 4) - Attorneys for Texas Governor George W. Bush filed suit in federal court today, seeking to prevent Santa Claus from making his list and then checking it twice. The complaint seeks an immediate injunction against the beloved Christmas icon, asking the court to effectively ban his traditional practice of checking the list of good boys and girls one additional time before packing his sleigh.



The Kennebunkport Hillbilly

(sung to the tune of *The Beverly Hillbillies*)

Come and listen to my story 'bout a boy name Bush.
His IQ was zero and his head was up his tush,
He drank like a fish while he drove all about.
But that didn't matter 'cuz his daddy bailed him out.
DUI, that is, Criminal record. Cover-up.

Well, the first thing you know little Georgie goes to Yale.
He can't spell his name but they never let him fail.
He spends all his time hangin' out with student folk.
And that's when he learns how to snort a line of coke.
Blow, that is. White gold. Nose candy.

The next thing you know there's a war in Vietnam.
Kin folks say, "George, stay at home with Mom."
Let the common people get maimed and scarred.
We'll buy you a spot in the Texas Air Guard.
Cushy, that is. Country clubs. Nose candy.

"They misunderestimate me."

BUSH INTRODUCES GUN CONTROL BILL

By Gym Jones

WASHINGTON, DC, Feb. 8 - A series of threatening events have caused George W. Bush to reconsider his stance on gun control. In a historical Republican first, the President introduced a strict gun control policy to Congress. Bush's plan proved to be even more liberal than Democrats anticipated, as it makes private ownership of guns by any US citizen a felony.

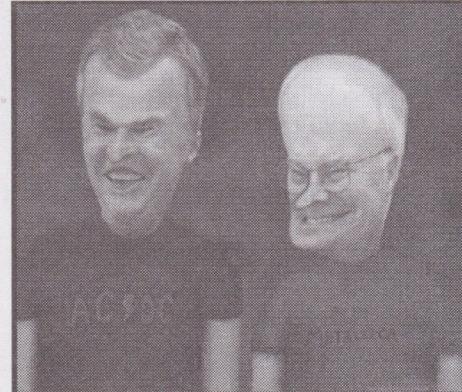
The legislation was brought on after Bush was clearly shaken by several incidences of hostility directed at him in the last few days. On Monday, a Wisconsin teenager, serving jail time for making bomb threats, told a parole board he wanted to "buy a gun and assassinate Bush."

On Wednesday morning, a 47 year-old CPA fired several shots into the air around the White House before being shot and subdued by the Secret Service. Later Wednesday, a heated exchange took place between Bush and his local dry-cleaner over a bill, and culminated in the store owner screaming at Bush, "You better pay, or I'll shoot your face off." The Secret Service then shot the man.

U.S. RESPONDS TO SHARON VICTORY IN ISRAEL

By Tom Rainey

Washington D.C., Feb. 7 - As the Bush foreign policy team surveyed the significantly changed landscape in Israel heralded by the victory of Ariel Sharon as Prime Minister, the pre-eminent concern seemed to be to assure Washington's Arab allies that U.S. weapons would continue to be sold to both sides so long as drugs and oil continued to flow to the U.S.



Huh, huh, you said 'bush.'

Huh, huh, you said 'dick.'

Twenty years later George gets a little bored.
He trades in the booze, says that Jesus is his Lord.
He said, "Now the White House is the place I wanna be."
So he called his daddy's friends and they called the GOP
Gun owners, that is. Falwell, Jesse Helms.

Come November 7, the election ran late.
Kin folks said, "Jeb, give the boy your state!"
"Don't let those colored folks get into the polls."
So they put up barricades so they couldn't punch their holes.
Chads, that is. Duval County. Miami-Dade.

Before the votes were counted five Supremes stepped in.
Told all the voters "Hey, we want George to win."
"Stop counting votes!" was their solemn invocation.
And that's how George finally got his coronation.
Rigged, that is. Illegitimate. No moral authority.

Y'all come vote now. Ya hear?

Declaration of Independence Revocation

London, 8th November 2000

To the citizens of the United States of America,
Following your failure to elect a President of the USA to govern yourselves and, by extension, the free world, we hereby give notice of the revocation of your independence. Her Sovereign Majesty Queen Elizabeth II will resume a monarch's duties over all states, commonwealths and other territories.

To aid in the transition to a British Crown Dependency, please comply with the following acts:

1. Look up "revoke" in a dictionary
2. Learn at least the first 4 lines of "God save the Queen"
3. Start referring to "soccer" as football
4. Declare war on Quebec

Tax collectors from Her Majesty's Government will be with you shortly to ensure the acquisition of all revenues due (backdated to 1776). Thank you for your cooperation and...have a nice day!

Excerpts from BushOnCrack.com:

Bill Gates To Receive Budget Surplus

By Beowulf Rochlen

WASHINGTON D.C., Feb. 12 - In a sudden change of strategy, President Bush today proposed that the entire projected U.S. budget surplus of over three trillion dollars be given to Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates. "I had been thinking that a huge tax cut benefiting the wealthiest one percent of Americans would be the best way to go," said Bush, speaking before the White House press corps. "But then it hit me - why not just give an even bigger tax cut to the wealthiest one American?"

BUSH CRASHES DEMOCRATIC RETREAT

By Gym Jones

FARMINGTON, PA, Feb. 5 - In a drunken stupor, President George W. Bush barged into an invite-only Democratic Retreat yelling "Wassssup Bennekunkport!" and then telling Democrats he was about to "Get the party jumpin, bumpin, booty humpin," before passing out on the floor. Democratic attendees reported Bush was yammering incoherently about a tax cut before losing consciousness.

By Barbara Bader

Iranian New Year

Sun, sun, sun, here it comes—along with the urge to celebrate the fresh new days of spring, an instinct shared with our earliest ancestors.

The vernal equinox still marks the start of Iran's solar New Year, Norouz (no-ROOZ), Farsi for "new day." Thirteen days of festivities celebrate the rebirth of natural life with rituals reaching back millennia to pre-Islamic Zoroastrian Persia, when many cultures honored the solar new year with springtime rituals. Today Norouz is associated particularly with Iran. After the Muslim Arabs invaded in 641 AD, Zoroastrians migrated all over the world, carrying with them Norouz traditions. It's celebrated in Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, parts of India and anywhere Iranians have roamed, including Portland.

Nobody knows the true origins of Norouz. Folk tales credit fabled kings and heroes who fought off evil forces of darkness. Norouz is loaded with symbols of death and rebirth, and the victory of good over evil, but modern Persians mix it up with a lot of family fun and activity.

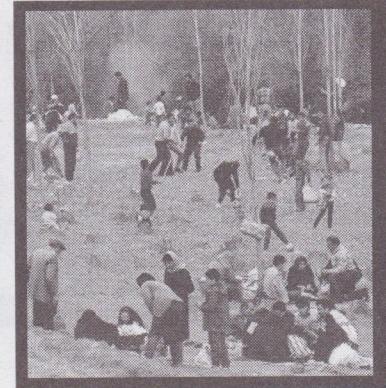
Norouz revelers clean and decorate their homes in anticipation of the untainted New Year. The real festivities launch at sundown Tuesday, March 20, with the Chahar Shanbeh Suri, Festival of the Last Wednesday. New Years Eve celebrants build communal bonfires.

People of all ages and both genders leap over the flames yelling, "Sorkhie tu az man, zardieh man az tu!" Farsi for "Your fiery red color is mine, and my sickly yellow paleness is yours." The idea is to leave behind bad luck to the fire and emerge into a new year of good fortune.

This purification aspect of Chahar Shanbeh Suri might have descended from the ancient Suri (Fire) Festival. The Zoroastrians kindled rooftop bonfires, signaling to angels and spirits that their earthly homes had been purified for annual ghostly visits.

Children dress in shrouds to portray their ancestors' spirits arriving for their Norouz family gathering. The spirit-pretenders raise a ruckus, banging on pans to drive away the last of the old year as they go from door to door begging for treats. Perhaps Halloween comes from the ancient Celts' version of this custom.

Musicians, masked by dark make-up and red costumes, sing and dance through the street with drums, tambourines and trumpets. In the hours before the equinox, families gather near the Haft Sinn table to talk, sing, and read from the Qur'an. Prepared with seven ("Haft") foods symbolizing good fortune, all beginning with the Farsi letter "S" (Sinn), the ceremony harks back to the ancient Persian reverence for the number seven. The Qur'an also has a place on the



Relatives and friends gathering together on the last day of Norouz.

table, alongside painted eggs, rosewater, incense, milk, coins, and goldfish swimming in a bowl.

At the moment of the equinox, hugs and kisses, presents, and sweets are shared all around. Lighted candles grace mirrors to symbolize fire, light, goodness and reflections of creation and the self.

Iranians devote the rest of Norouz to social visits, feasts, gift exchanges, and general good fun. The renewal of relationships and the anticipation of a fresh year become the central celebration. Perhaps this annual personal renewal is the most valuable gift left by the ancients.

On the last day of Norouz, relatives and friends gather at a river or stream far from home to spend the day together in nature. The ritualistic tossing of the Sabzeh, green sprouts grown for the new year, into the water symbolizes the final cleansing of evil spirits. Families sing, dance, play games and sports, and feast all day till the sun sets and a new year begins. **NG**

Mirror, Mirror continued from page 9

the shattered pieces of their societies, as well as their own lives, when it is over. But they are rarely involved in the process that launches or resolves conflict."

Women's absence from decision-making positions means the conversation lacks an important perspective. "For all too long, the glittering prize of the marketplace has been held out as the incentive for peace-building," Queen Noor points out. "But women on the ground in war zones know how much cleaning up needs to be done before a society recovering from conflict can even begin to contemplate international commerce."

She believes women's voices are beginning to be heard. While women make up only 11% of the world's leadership, grassroots organizations are taking off, women are speaking up, and politicians are beginning to realize that women do vote. But, she says, "We must expand and accelerate the involvement of

women – their voices, opinions, and ideas at the highest political levels."

As an American-born citizen turned Middle Eastern political leader, Queen Noor offers a unique viewpoint. The peace she seeks is not just absence of hostility, but is based in "equity, tolerance and understanding." Policies will not succeed, says the Queen, unless they are based on acknowledgement of sacrifices, and on mutual partnerships that recognize and respect cultural differences, perspectives and needs. Partnerships are the only way to guarantee lasting security and sustainable economic relationships. And, she adds, "There will be no security for anyone in the region without security for everyone in the region."

Women can play a pivotal role in this process. "When they have seen what they can do for themselves and their families, women realize their collective power. Women have always held up the world. Now

they are learning that together they can change it."

She ends her address by returning to Mao Tse Tung. "When women are no longer required to shoulder the burden of the world, but stand on it equally, side by side with men, then indeed they will hold up half the sky." **NG**



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Islam Respects Educated Women

By Nadia Maiwandi

In 1996, following the 11-year Soviet occupation and a seven-year civil war, the Taliban took control of Afghanistan. The Taliban is as an extremist militia claiming Islam as their guide, but most of their actions are crimes against Islam (see story on the Taliban, page 18). Most Taliban are not from Afghanistan, the country they rule, but from countries with interest in dominating the areas such as Pakistan and Saudi. When they came into power, the Taliban immediately closed down all schools, declaring the curricula to be non-Islamic. While some boys' schools have been reopened, girls are still denied an education. The world's memory can be short, and many have the misconception that Afghan women are, and have always been, uneducated and discouraged from seeking education. This is far from the truth.

Both my parents were born in Kabul, Afghanistan in 1941 and moved to the United States the same year they married in 1966. Growing up, my brother and I never heard the words, "if you go to college..." It was always "when you go to college...." If anything, I was encouraged more strongly to attend college because academia seemed more my thing, while my brother Yosuf concentrated on finding out how things worked. As a result, I earned a master's degree in English, and Yosuf became a successful mechanic.

When I read stories that filter through to this side of the globe about Afghan (and other Muslim) women who are told that educating them is bad, I don't negate their experiences. I know what they say to be the unfortunate truth and a growing reality. Surely with the Taliban firmly in place, no one can deny some do have this mentality in the Middle East and Central Asia. But when the actions of only this small faction is reported, it gives Westerners the false perception that this is everyone's opinion and experience in the Middle East and that Middle-Eastern women are not educated. "Prior to the civil war and Taliban control, women in Afghanistan were educated and employed: 50 percent of the students and 60 percent of the [professors] at Kabul University were women, and 70 percent of school teachers, 50 percent of civilian government workers, and 40 percent of doctors were women," the *Feminist Majority* reports. This is the Afghanistan I know, because on both sides of my family the women are the shining scholars. For this they have respect.

My mother graduated from Kabul University third in her class with a B.A. in English. She tells me that every girl she knew who was not poor went to school and that most of her classmates from high school went on to college—that's a better track record than my American friends. "No one I knew had their parents telling them that girls shouldn't be educated. I always knew education to be a good, positive thing," she tells me. "I remember my dad saying that none of us [kids]



My mother in 1949 dressed in her school uniform.

were allowed to get married until we graduated from college first."

In a few short years, Afghanistan has become a very different place under the rule of the Taliban. Before the wars, not only did the government of one of the most impoverished nations in the world offer higher education to all citizens, regardless of gender, class, race, or ethnicity—they paid every college student who attended. Here in the richest country in the world, we charge students thousands of dollars a year, putting most in debt and cheating the poorest out of an education altogether.

My mother's sisters, who were also born in the 1940s (two significantly younger sisters were not college age when the Soviets invaded), all graduated from college in Kabul. Before emigrating to the states, Khalida was a doctor in pathology; Shafiqa got her bachelor's degree in English (her master's degree is from Cincinnati University); and Maliha was a journalist.

My father's side is even more scholarly. Grandfather insisted that all his children, whether boy or girl, go to med school. His wish came true for four of his six children—my dad and all three sisters became doctors;

Mahgul is an anesthesiologist practicing in New York, Shirin, a pathologist in Pakistan, and Mahjabeen, a pediatrician in San Diego.

Currently, several extremist groups are rising in power in the Middle East. These groups are either incredibly misinformed on the religion they claim to represent or are purposely twisting the Qur'an to justify their schemes. The Taliban has not only banned girls from attending school, but also made it illegal for women to work. Many women are widows from 23 years of war and now have no way of supporting their families. In four and a half years, this regime has reduced a once-proud nation to a destitute wasteland.

To say that giving women freedom is against the teachings of the Qur'an is untrue. The Qur'an decreed many rights to women 1,500 years ago: the right to work, own property, vote, and receive an education. The Prophet Mohammed said, "Seeking knowledge is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman." He also said, "A mother is a school. If she is educated, then a whole people are educated."

Zieba Shorish-Shamley, Ph.D. writes, "In early Islamic history there were many women scholars who had very significant roles in the Islamic world. For example, Ayisha, the Prophet's wife, was one of the most famous Muslim scholars. Not only was she very intelligent, she had an exceptional memory.... the Prophet told the Muslims to go to Ayisha for guidance and learning of religious duties...."

The Prophet also said, "The father, if he educates his daughter well, will enter Paradise." I don't know if my father ever heard this Hadith (a quote from the Prophet), but he lived it. He passed away when I was only 18, but my strongest memories of him are how he took great pride in my grades and encouraged me to become a doctor. My life in journalism was not his first choice, but I do have the security and good education he wanted for me. This I owe to him and to all the women in my family who paved the road for me. I also owe my life to Afghanistan, where my people were born and which has given me a rich culture and history. Had my family history gone differently, we might have been living under the fascist rule of the Taliban today. I vow to fight for my Afghan sisters who have been silenced by these brutal forms of oppression. None will be free until we all are free. **NG**



There are filmmakers around the world who continue to be censored by religiously controlled governments (interchangeable with government-controlled religions), and this is no more apparent than in cinema from certain countries of the Middle East and northern Africa. Much feminist film is heavily censored or banned completely. This includes anything remotely questioning women's traditional roles, particularly in Muslim culture, regardless of filmmaker. So serious is the threat of censorship and harassment of artists that many leave their homeland for a less oppressive neighboring state or for another part of the world altogether. Let's take Iran, for example:

After Iran's Islamic Revolution in the late 1970s, the government sent the Revolutionary Guard to arrest actors and filmmakers and banned or censored 2,000 films. The Guard became a permanent fixture during production, making certain that everyone on the set followed proper relations and dress according to the Islamic code. They prohibited all contact between men and women, including verbal and eye contact. Early on, family members were permitted to touch, so directors hired family groups as actors, but eventually even onscreen contact among family members was banned, and eye contact showing "feeling" with the eyes was regulated. Women were not allowed to be filmed or even be on the set unveiled. By 1983, the religious regulations were officially ratified and enforced by the Office of Censorship created by the Ministry of Islamic Guidance.

Some filmmakers implemented techniques forced upon them in creative ways. Many simply stopped casting women in films. Restrictions have relaxed in Iran in the last decade somewhat. However, to avoid censorship, filmmakers must comply with regulations to avoid feminist or lesbian themes. And women continue to be veiled in film.

*Iranian information abstracted by Barbara Bader from "The True Face of Women: A Missing Link in Iranian Cinema" by Parvaneh Soltani, published in the October 1998 *Iran Bulletin*, London, England.*



The Sealed Soil

(Khak-e Sar Beh Mosh, 1977,
Wr/Dir: Marva M. Nabili)

The Sealed Soil is a film as much a testament to its Iranian filmmaker's courage as for its own cinematic virtues. The first Iranian feature by a woman, the film's content is so taboo it had to be smuggled out of pre-revolutionary Iran in the false bottom of a suitcase. *Soil* is the first of a handful of films from Iran featuring young women confronting age-old family expectations and their roles in traditional Shi'a culture.

Filmed in a secret six-day shoot on location in Iran, *The Sealed Soil* chronicles the emotional breakdown of Rooy-Bekheir, an 18-year-old unmarried woman still living with her family in a desert village not long before the revolution. Rooy is a girl free and natural only in night dreams. Before she even rises from bed, she must hide herself to greet the day. The image of an awakening Rooy braiding her long, shiny hair in a lush early sequence quickly fades when the lovely teenager disappears under the folds of the chador.

Refusing marriage and motherhood, Rooy withdraws into herself, ridiculed by her own friends as her identity crisis builds. Anxiety swells as family women, neighbor women, and village elders press her to conform to their expectations. She is trapped between the predetermined role that awaits her at home and the changing world outside her village, emphasized by the liberating influence of the nearby modern town's unveiled schoolteacher on the children from her hometown.

Nabili breaks the censors' code by filming Rooy with hair flowing free; she introduces further provocation when Rooy sheds her clothing, in a rain shower that drenches her hair and forbidden skin. *The Sealed Soil* has never been shown in Iran. Nabili currently lives in the United States. - Barbara Bader is a freelance writer, editor, and filmmaker living in Portland.



Honey and Ashes

(Miel et Cendres, 1996, Wr/Dir: Nadia Fares)

Honey and Ashes is the first feature film from Swiss-Tunisian director Nadia Fares. This award-winning movie, set in Islamic Tunisia, is an excellent example of women's twofold battle against oppression—in the greater culture and in their own homes.

Leila is an intelligent and assertive young woman who flees her home and abusive father to marry Hassan, the man of her choice. Unfortunately she is not the choice of her would-be mother-in-law, who forbids Hassan to see Leila, as she feels the girl's clothes and independence are sure signs that Leila is a slut. Hassan cannot stand up to his mother or her wishes to see him marry his cousin, so Leila is left to fend for herself.

Meanwhile Naima, a local doctor, is trying to raise her daughter to be self-confident and independent. Outraged at the patriarchal institutions that condone abuse of women, Naima is also afraid to overstep her own boundaries within the system.

Both of these women come into fleeting or second-hand contact (in a *Magnolia*-esque way) with Amina, whose once passionate marriage to her former professor has spiraled into resentment and violence.

Leila is the central character in *Honey*, reflecting the lives of the other women. Even Naima's daughter appears to be growing up to be like spirited Leila. Leila's fortitude, however, is no guarantee of success in her restrictive society where women's roles are clearly defined. *Honey* pointedly illustrates that love does not protect these women from male expectations. - LB

(continued on page 31)



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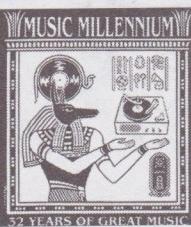
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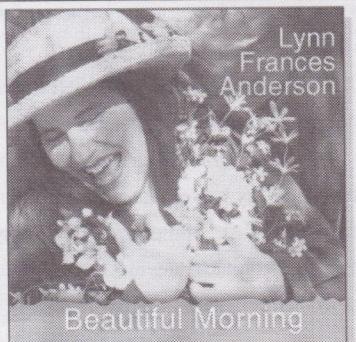
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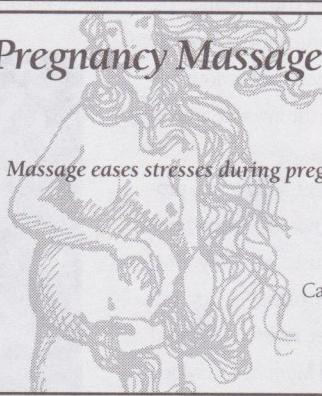
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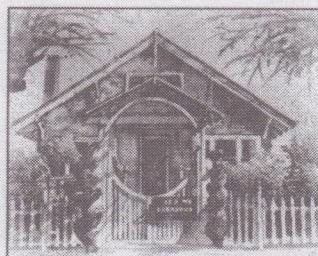
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Dream Weaver

By Michelle A. L. Singer

"For all who notice the magic, may every new day begin with a beautiful morning, end in a nice night, and bring you the courage to be who you are!"

- Lynn Frances Anderson

Our dreams float around inside us showing up unpredictably in the midst of conversations, blank stares, and exercise routines. Often they seem so dreamy that we hardly believe we can breathe life into them. Though we hear the "Follow your dreams!" bit all our lives, actually doing it is much more intense, intricate, and scary. It takes a significant amount of courage and faith to step out onto the invisible limb of doing what your heart truly desires.

Lynn Frances Anderson—singer, songwriter, producer, and musician (and that's not all)—describes her label Laughing Flower Music as, "My BMI Publishing Company, Promoter, Booking Agency, and Management." Laughing Flower recently released Anderson's second CD, *Beautiful Morning*, on which she wrote all but one song.

Deciding to live a dream usually involves a period of hemming and hawing, sometimes for years, before the dreamer commits to her art. Anderson is no exception. "I don't think most artists wake up one morning and say 'Gee I think I'm an artist.' I think it's something you already are and then you make the decision if you're going to follow that or not."

Although she majored in music at the University of Oregon, Anderson floated a few years after college, working a series of jobs unrelated to music and eventually playing in cover bands on weekends. She began writing her first CD with a good friend in the late 1980s, a project that took years to complete. Her friend passed away before the CD was released, and

she found herself suddenly wondering what she was going to do next. Not until then did she commit to music full time. "I said 'okay, I'm either gonna do this or I'm never gonna do this.' Even after the first CD, there's no map to show you the way. You stumble



through, you watch what other people do, you ask a lot of questions, and you try to figure out what the heck to do."

Anderson's new career as creator involved taking big risks—which she is exceptional—like going to cities where she wasn't known. Knowing perhaps one person, sometimes none, she created connections around the country when she played, and the next time around built on those connections. She also has a willingness about her; when an idea or opportunity finds her, she takes it. Her gambles have created the foundation she stands on now.

"If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put foundations under them." - Henry David Thoreau

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So you have taken bold steps onto the path of your wildest dreams, but what does happily ever after really look like? "One of the challenges is trying to pay the bills and still be creative. How do I do that? I don't know! I work all day and all night, that's pretty normal, and I'm okay with that. But some days I just go, 'I can't do it today.' Is it overwhelming? Yeah. How do I deal with that? I keep my sense of humor! Either I follow my dreams or I don't, and if I don't, what happens to my soul? This is the best time ever, even though I'm working harder than I ever have."

When it comes to courage, Anderson has plenty. She also possesses a healthy supply of the second ingredient needed to make dreams come true—faith. Anderson describes it this way: "My hilarious co-hort, Mary J. Curtis, also my guitarist and harmonica player, says to me, 'Lynn, I've seen you walk out to the edge of a cliff and step off saying, "God, help me out here." God hands you a shovel and says, "Here ya go, start digging." And you dig like hell until you've brought the ground right up underneath you—every time.' It's really about trust."

Following your dreams is worth every bit of nerve, conviction, and hard work necessary. **NG**

Check Out: www.lynnfrancesanderson.com to order CDs and concert tix and follow her schedule of events. CDs are also available at It's My Pleasure, Borders Downtown, In Other Words bookstore, and Music Millennium. For upcoming events, check out the calendar on page 17.

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By Leah Bobal

Invasive the Heart

Nag Champa scents the sultry air as a group of bejeweled women in bright, flowing skirts shimmy right and left to an enchanting rhythm. Their tattooed arms undulate like snakes. They turn, raise their eyebrows, even smile, recognizing that they are invaders of the heart.

These mesmerizing women attend Caravan Studio, a new bellydance school in Portland. Like an increasing number of women across the country, Caravan Studio students are discovering the power and beauty of bellydance—and the power and beauty within themselves. They're learning to become *Ghawazee*,



Paulette Reese-Denis, founder of Gypsy Caravan. (Photo courtesy of Caravan Studio)

translated literally as "invaders of the heart," after the gypsies who settled along the lower Nile and in Cairo in medieval Egypt.

The renewed popularity of bellydance, be it tribal or cabaret (solo), unites women of all cultures to dance, laugh, and even cry. A quick search on the Internet reveals bellydance schools and troupes from California to Pennsylvania. Like the gypsies of a bygone era, they adapt bellydance for a new generation.

Paulette Rees-Denis, founder of Caravan Studio, attributes the rising popularity of bellydance, and tribal bellydance in particular, to a human need for connection. "This is a place people can come together and

support each other. People are so hungry for [community]."

As a child in Iran, Portland bellydance instructor Fariba Zaltash was surrounded by a community in which bellydance graced every special occasion—a wedding, the birth of a child, or the Persian New Year (celebrated March 21). At six years old, during a family party, Fariba first glimpsed the magic.

"They had high spirits, they were warm-hearted, they wanted to make sure everyone was having a good time together," she recalls. Inspired by the performance, she started dancing at home for her sisters. She

emulated the dancers she saw in East Indian films on TV, and she even danced to songs on the radio. "If there was music, I was dancing," Fariba says and smiles. "I had it in my heart."

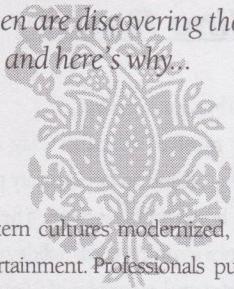
In the Arab-Islamic world, bellydance developed from ancient fertility rites into an art form that still invades the hearts of many. It's hard to pinpoint the geographical origin of bellydance, because many countries—Greece, Turkey, Persia, Egypt, Spain, among others—have been home to bellydance.

Caravan Studio teaches tribal bellydance, still practiced in Egypt, in which women dance together as a tribe. Dance scholar/performer Morocco reports participating in a Berber tribal birthing ceremony. She says that women gathered in a tent while the men waited outside. A hole was

dug in the ground, where the pregnant woman sat surrounded by circles of women dancing with repetitive abdominal movements as she gave birth.

A bellydancer activates her abdomen, pelvis, and hips—parts of her body shamed, poked, violated, and scrutinized by American society. Unlike ballet, which is danced on the toes, bellydance is an earthy dance: feet are firmly planted on the ground, knees bent, hips ready to move. Whether in class, onstage, or at home, the bellydancer focuses physical and psychological attention on her blameless female center. The power women create within themselves through bellydance is both scary and exciting, according to Diana Bright, Caravan Studio bellydance instructor.

More and more women are discovering the beauty of bellydance, and here's why...



As Middle Eastern cultures modernized, bellydance became entertainment. Professionals pursued bellydance as an art form and the ritual and spiritual aspects slowly faded in some countries. A dividing line between acceptable and unacceptable bellydance eventually was drawn, and it remains today, hinged on the roles of women in their respective cultures.

In some fundamentalist Muslim societies, bellydance as entertainment is frowned upon; under Islamic law, women aren't allowed to show their bodies to strangers. Religious and government sectors in the Middle East have often condemned bellydance, banishing dancers and musicians throughout the ages. The Ghawazee were banished from Cairo in 1834, and several years ago Muslim fundamentalists moved to ban cabaret dance in Egypt.

Yet in many Arab countries, women still dance privately for one another. "The culture was basically conservative for women," says Fariba, who moved to the U.S. in the mid-70s to learn English. She was drawn to America because it meant freedom. "People thought that a woman should pay attention to cooking [and] learning to be a good housewife. Bellydance was okay as long as you were at home or with other girls."

Much of America sees bellydance as something taboo as well, according to Reese-Denis. "When I say 'I bellydance,' Americans still have that Hollywood picture of a woman in a scanty costume dancing on a tabletop," she says. "There is that style, and it can be done well and not so well. Some women want to bellydance to turn on their husbands, but that's not why I do it."

A man booking "exotic dancers" for the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 allegedly coined the term "bellydance." Similar cultural exhibitions were held throughout America during the late 1800s, and foreign dancers graced their stages. The healthy wages these dancers took home inspired others to head west. Hailing from diverse cultures across the Middle East, these dancers brought their own interpretation of bellydance and quickly adapted it to another culture.

Americans fell in love with bellydance, inspired by authentic dancers and Hollywood's version. Films depicted bellydancers as femme fatales, heroines, or vamps. Mata Hari claimed Far East descent and even described her dance as "sacred." Syrian dancer "Little

Zine Review

Review by Kipp Normand

For most of us Labor Day is no more than a Monday off and an opportunity to watch Jerry Lewis go 24 hours without sleep. The truth is Labor Day was once a controversial holiday deeply rooted in the struggles and triumphs of 19th century American workers. Their (sometimes bloody) efforts to secure an 8-hour workday and the right to join a union for the power of collective bargaining are things we take for granted. One new zine is out to remind us of the history of the labor movement and its importance to people working in the service industry today.

Cost of Living is produced by a group of Portland's Powells Books employees. Their mission: "to cultivate a grassroots community of workers who question current artificially constructed notions of what constitutes a fair wage for the service industry which employs bike messengers, midwives, gas station attendants, strippers, retail clerks, janitors, hotel workers, food service workers...[those] for whom the so-called booming economy has provided no stability or improved standard of living." The zine covers a wide range of topics including historical tidbits ("in 1887 Oregon became the first state to make Labor Day a legal holiday"), labor and protest songs, the often overlooked tradition of public speaking, the radical press in Portland, a lament for a vanished local brewery, and a review of the obscure autobiography* of Boxcar Bertha's experiences traveling the rails as a hobo in the 1930s. This is wild and fascinating stuff.

In addition to being an historical resource, *Cost of Living* is a call to action—one inspired by the zine producers' own labor pains: "We carved out a widespread support for the [union] from the cold stone of a demoralized staff who thought they were powerless change their situation. If we can do that at one store, think of what we can do as a community of worker-activists."

Cost of Living has the raw cut and paste look of pre-computer zines that gives the publication an underground edge. The intentional imperfection makes one article hard to follow; however, the design flaws in the first issue barely tarnish the wealth of information and inspiration provided in *Cost of Living*.

The second issue of *Cost of Living* will be available in late March. You can buy both issues at Powell's Books Downtown, Laughing Horse Books, Reading Frenzy, Q is for Choir or by contacting the publishers at cost-of-living@mail.com or "A.M." at 5062 NE 21st Street, Portland, OR 97211

* Boxcar Bertha: An Autobiography by Bertha Thompson originally published by Gold Label Books in 1937.

Invaders of the Heart continued from page 29

Egypt" (Fahreda Mahzar) captured the delight of crowds at the 1893 exhibition.

Why women at the beginning of the 21st Century are drawn to bellydance can only be answered by the women who have let it invade their own hearts.

"I love it because I've always wanted to let my belly hang out, but I guess I always thought it was wrong," said Sophe Ach, gesturing to her exposed belly. Ach took chanting classes in New Orleans where she met a bellydance instructor. After moving to Portland, Ach found Caravan Studio where maidens, mothers, and crones of all shapes and sizes are learning to bellydance in the company of other women. "I like the fact that everyone is here with their bellies hanging out; that it's okay."

Though she won't pinpoint her age, Fariba is a middle-aged woman still dancing and performing "Bellygrams" for birthdays and special occasions. Teaching bellydance throughout Oregon since 1975, Fariba has been both admired and shunned by various communities. During the 1980s, Americans likened her to hostage takers in the Middle East; meanwhile, conservative Islamic groups criticized her for bellydancing. Unfazed, Fariba still loves bellydance. "I have

to work hard to have my doors open to the public," she says. "I want the atmosphere to be healthy for the women who want to come and dance. I do it for my customers."

Intriguing the Portland dance community with her professional bellydance troupe, Gypsy Caravan, for the last 10 years, Reese-Denis relates, "There's something that happens in bellydance that's so magical, so powerful, even after this many years, it happens. You build an energy when you dance together." **NG**

Caravan Studio is located at 4050 NE Broadway and offers bellydance in six-week sessions for all levels. Drop-ins welcome. Caravan also offers classes in Yoga, Flamenco, and Bharata Natyam (Classical Temple Dance of South India). For information, call (503) 287-1794 or visit www.alveus.com/gypsycaravan. Fariba's Studio is located at 2823 NE Sandy Blvd. and offers weekly bellydance classes weekly and Birthday Grams. She can be reached at 503-231-8375.

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Music Review



**Brian Jones
Presents The
Pipes of Pan at
Jajouka**
Master Musicians of
Jajouka, Point
Music re-released
1995

Review by Allison Dubinsky

Back in the decadent, heady days of the late 1960s, Rolling Stones guitarist Brian Jones was introduced to the mesmerizing songs of the Master Musicians of Jajouka while on a jaunt to the Rif Mountains just outside of Tangiers, Morocco. The Musicians were as fascinated with Jones as he was with them: leader Bachir Attar writes of the man with the "big golden hair" who arrived in their midst, while Jones settled in and recorded seven hours of their music. That recording became *Brian Jones Presents the Pipes of Pan at Jajouka* (originally released in 1971) and served as the world's

principal introduction to the entrancing, polyrhythmic music, although Beat writers William Burroughs' and Paul Bowles' praised the Musicians' talents as well.

Each Master Musician takes on a priest-like, lifelong devotion to the pursuit and practice of his music. The men (yes, only men) are chosen and trained from childhood to play the incantations, each sometimes lasting several days with different musicians taking turns as the performance progresses. Burroughs described them as a "4,000-year-old rock band," but these performances could easily be called 4,000-year-old raves inducing extended states of ecstatic trance.

They collaborated with electronica guru Talvin Singh on their latest release, *The Master Musicians of Jajouka with Talvin Singh* (2000), although that CD as well as their presence on the soundtrack of *The Cell* seems to have tainted their mystical legacy, leading more than one critic to accuse them of being "driven more by commercial prospects than artistic merit." The work with Singh is more accessible to a Western ear; often the music's inherent strangeness sounds

diluted, coming across as an exotic backdrop to fabulously danceable electronica.

Brian Jones Presents The Pipes of Pan at Jajouka provides a pure experience. Using a number of traditional instruments, among them the ghaita (Arabic oboe), lira (bamboo flute), and double-headed Moroccan drum, the Masters conjure up complicated, absorbing music. You can find your own way through this album without the guidance (or interference) of extensive studio production. Tracks that seem at first to be no more than discordant sound gradually reveal an intricate pattern composed of distinct elements—hands clapping, shrill flutes, an intermittent cough, and (my favorite) the tumultuous, incessant chanting of women on "Your Eyes Are Like a Cup of Tea." Their voices remind me of the ecstatic screams of thousands of girls and boys in the background of live Beatles tapes. It's that half-desperate, half-satisfied pitch of willful amnesia: of having lost the world, or yourself, in the music. **NG**

Original Cinema continued from page 27



There are filmmakers around the world who continue to be censored by religiously

family members were permitted to touch, so directors hired family groups as actors, but eventually even onscreen contact among family members was banned, and eye contact showing "feeling" with the eyes was regulated. Women were not allowed to be filmed or even be on the set unveiled. By 1983, the religious regulations were officially ratified and enforced by the Office of Censorship created by the Ministry of Islamic Guidance.

Some filmmakers implemented techniques forced upon them in creative ways. Many simply stopped casting women in films. Restrictions have relaxed in Iran in the last decade somewhat. However, to avoid censorship, filmmakers must comply with regu-

controlled governments (interchangeable with government-controlled religions), and this is no more apparent than in cinema from certain countries of the Middle East and northern Africa. Much feminist film is heavily censored or banned completely. This includes anything remotely questioning women's traditional roles, particularly in Muslim culture, regardless of filmmaker. So serious is the threat of censorship and harassment of artists that many leave their homeland for a less oppressive neighboring state or for another part of the world altogether. Let's take Iran, for example:

After Iran's Islamic Revolution in the late 1970s, the government sent the Revolutionary Guard to arrest actors and filmmakers and banned or censored 2,000 films. The Guard became a permanent fixture during production, making certain that everyone on the set followed proper relations and dress according to the Islamic code. They prohibited all contact between men and women, including verbal and eye contact. Early on,

lations to avoid feminist or lesbian themes. And women continue to be veiled in film.

Iranian information abstracted by Barbara Bader from "The True Face of Women: A Missing Link in Iranian Cinema" by Parvaneh Soltani, published in the October 1998 *Iran Bulletin*, London, England.

The Sealed Soil

(*Khak-e Sar Beh Mord*, 1977, Wr./Dir: Marva M. Nabil)

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Nervy Girl! Book Group

voices
from
the
Listen
up.
next
feminist
generation

edited by Barbara Findlen

"I'm excited to be here because it's a book I would have wanted to read anyway."
-nervy book lover

Last time, we read Listen Up. Voices of the

Next Feminist Generation, edited by Barbara Findlen and published by Seal Press, a collection of 28 short essays by a diverse group of women. The book got instant approval from our cozy group of eight; as one member remarked, "Everyone I know should read it." The writers spanned cultures, sexual orientations, backgrounds, and abilities. They explored a wide range of topics: race, abortion, sex, beauty, religion, family, and activism, among others. "Seeing how I personally could or could not relate [to each writer's experience] was an eye opener," one reader commented.

We came ready to discuss the topic all essays focused on in some way—feminism. Most, if not all, of the voices in Listen Up are college-educated. What does that mean for feminism? "If feminists were really egalitarian, they would write popular fiction," said one nervy girl. Another proposed that if we'd only admit, like many of the book's contributors, that we aren't as enlightened as we pretend to be, feminism might not be seen as an exclusive club. "Sometimes I catch myself thinking the most offensive shit!" she confided. "Aren't we all racist, sexist, ableist to some degree? Let's stop wasting time being defensive and really listen up!" The drama and humor of these short pieces worked for us. We agreed that feminism means acknowledging a problem.

None of us wanted to wait two months until the next scheduled book group, so we've decided to meet monthly instead. Our next selection is *Cunt* by Inga Muscio (one of the authors included in Listen Up). *Cunt* is available at *In Other Words* bookstore on Hawthorne for a 10 percent discount to nervy girls! We will meet March 14th at 7 p.m. at the Cricket Cafe (3159 SE Belmont) to discuss the book. Check www.nervygirlzine.com for updates.

Illustration by Joanna Present Wolfe